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STORM-THRUSH

EDEN PHILLPOTTS

From high tops of the naked elms I hear
The amber storm-thrush herald spring again
Where head-long winds of March on glittering rain
Scatter his glassy music cold and clear
And elfin-sweet—an all unconscious strain
Bringing enchantment to my conscious ear
With whilom memories that still endear
The swaying minstrel of this wild domain.

A message of remembrance thus conveyed
More than the little messenger could guess,
For, note by note, his twilight serenade
Turned to a smile, a welcome, a caress.
So may our prattle hearten fellow men
By waking thoughts beyond the speaker's ken.

CHANSON PERPETUELLE

RACHEL ANNAND TAYLOR

A bird is singing in the red rose-tree:
The rainbow leaps across the diamond rain:
A girl and boy drift down the lovers' lane.—
Earth has forgotten her divinity;
The domes and spires of beauty are undone;
Unquiet ghosts about the world lament
That mere destruction has eclipsed the sun.
They wrought immortal strange felicity;
But ruined is their lovely monument,
Their torment and their triumph were in vain.—
Rest, mournful ghosts, the tale begins again.
Your names with your lost images are blent;
Yet beauty that has been again shall be.—
There are two lovers in the lovers' lane:
The rainbow leaps across the diamond rain:
The Bird is singing in the red Rose-Tree.

SAILOR, SAILOR...

WILFRID GIBSON

Sailor, sailor, what do you see—
Staring hard at the tropic tide?
"A Highland croft on the mountainside,
And a woman waiting there for me."

Sailor, sailor, what do you see—
Staring mazed at a swinging block?
"A tenement-room near Limehouse Dock,
And a woman waiting there for me."

Sailor, sailor, what do you see—
Staring into the following wave?
"The fresh-turfed mound of a new-made grave,
And a woman waiting there for me."

MIDNIGHT WAKING

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

Drowned, drowned ten fathoms deep
In the dreamless well of sleep
I lay, till some vague cry,
Some hidden agony,
Drew me with rope and pulley up
Not to the top
But to that midway void within the reach
Of starlight faint as foam on blind sea-beach,
The place of dreams; and thither came your cry
Across cold leagues of pain. Then desperately
It came again and the pulley turned again
And I, hauled back to life,
Lay open-eyed, each quivering sense astrain
Like flesh beneath the knife.

Close at my side the comfortable sound
Of your soft breath: our small room closed me round.
But in the world outside,

Now east, now north,
The cocks were crowing. Out across the dark,
How clear, how keen, how small, each little arc
Of shining sound leapt forth,
Flew arrowlike, and into darkness died.

GOODFELLOW WIND

JOHN REDWOOD ANDERSON

I have heard the wind bellow
  On the cold night moor,
Like an angry drunken fellow
  Turned from the tavern door.

I have heard the wind swaggering:
  'I have had Spring to bed!'
I have seen the wind staggering
  With a wound upon his head.

I have heard the wind singing
  A lilt of Gypsy songs;
I have heard the wind ringing
  Brazen temple gongs.

I have met the wind at corners
  With street-boys at play;
I have seen him with the mourners
  Round the black bier of day.

I have heard the wind's laughter,
  As he slew and maimed and robbed:
I have found the wind after,
  When he hid his face and sobbed.

I have seen the wind lying
  In a hard bed of stone—
I have seen the wind dying,
  Friendless, alone.

I have seen the wind dead there . . .
  Can the wind die?
What passes overhead there,
  Where no birds fly?

SIESTA

R. H. MOTTRAM

Summer rain on the old prim garden,
Someone playing Brahms on the piano,
Cocks and hens in the distance cackling,
And thus I leave it all!
Closing the door on endless questioning,
Thought, art, wealth and farmyard policy,
Let slumber's curtain fall.

Not for long, for time is hastening,
Art is intricate, needy humanity
Only can pause in its daily vibration,
Sigh and close its eyes.
Soon I shall wake. Look, here beside me
My father's watch, that warned the city
Of times and functions. By its loved ticking
I shall awake and arise.

LARGE AND SMALL

HUW MENAI

No deep impression makes
The time-gnarled rowan tree
Whereas a wild rose shakes
The very heart of me.

Linnets and warblers throng
Where homes the primal oak—
Small birds have a sweet song,
The large but quack or croak.

Life's brevity gives keen
Essence-edge to its blade;
Lyrics keep evergreen
When laboured epics fade.

VIALS FULL OF ODOURS

WILFRED CHILDE

In white flowers breathes a strangely mystical odour:
White lilac, white hyacinth, the white elder-flower,
The orange-hearted silken-fleshed syringa,
The magnolia like a chalice of pale jade,
All these are most mysterious as to odours;
Sweet and penetrating is the sickly wine-blooth
Of the dazzling hawthorn, Alp of snowy shoulders,
Blazing like alabaster in the sun
Against the sapphire lucency of May days:
But most exceeding mystical of all
Is the effluence of the lily of the valley,
This has the richness of the depths, the warm
Green pregnant vales of Eden, and this has
The cool keen fragrance of the lonely heights,
Moon-haunted precipices of crystal splinters,
Also within it, where the abysmal cleft
Towers star-kissed, it is a spire of magic bells
Summoning us by its music to a country
Beyond the world, where lovers love at peace,
And much enduring friends once separated
Are now for ever at one in God's Elysium . . .

SHADOWS FROM THE SHIP

HUGH MACDIARMID

I stude in the heich efternune by the rail,
The sun bleezin' ahint me, silent, wi' the ship to mysel',
And on the foam o' oor bow-race
Fower ventilators' shadows, and mine, were cast,
A' aboot the same height and shape,
Rigid, and silent, and motionless.

The centre-castle's was in the lead,
The funnel's ahint, the derrick's owreheid.
On we gaed. And on gaed the shadow-show,
Motionless yet movin', ephemeral,

Yet, in its way, as lang as the sun shone
And the foam fermented, eternal.

Aince the sun was tint in a clood and we
Were tint tae. Aince the foam failed in odd sea
And we failed ana' This, I thocht, is life,
A shadow on the foam o' a wave
That lasts only as lang as the foam abides
Or till a wanderin' clood obscures the sun.

VERTICAL ANGLES

T. W. RAMSEY

Something has gone: the pike still in his pool,
The spider trembling in the web's ravishment
Have their touch on the pulse of nature, cool
As light of evening, light as wind's blandishment.

But from man something has gone—the spring uncoiled
Lies limp and rusting under the hedge;
His love too easy, his hate too easily foiled,
The blue sword of spirit blunted at edge.

And even tears, the spirit's extreme unction,
Laughter, the household cavalry of the heart,
Have slept too long, they have forgotten their function,
They stand uncaring, negligent, apart.

We want a great storm to sweep from horizon
To zenith, bringing the rain in a ringing bowl,
And the laughing scattering rushes of wind to enliven
The castellated heart, the encumbered soul.

We want these things, we had them it may be said,
We had them a moment and lost them in being clever
And powerful and proud and revengeful and fit for the dead
To despise who have passed beyond our noise and fever,

Who have passed beyond and can no longer look back
As we who can look forward and backward as well,
Poised like a dancer on dagger-point now of the track
And still free to choose between heaven and hell.

THE DISPLACED

P. D. CUMMINS

To whom, then, shall I turn? Shall I accost
This ghost or that of all the silent throng?
I hear my footsteps echoing and lost,
I feel the breath that hurries me along.
I see blank signs above the gaping doors
That lead to nowhere, see the stairways bend
And spiral up from empty floor to floor
In dark, unlighted nothingness to end.
To whom, then, shall I turn? Not to these shades
With their extinguished eyes, their hollow hearts,
Busy with commerce in the dim arcades,
Spinning their spectral coin at spectral marts.
To whom, then, shall I turn, whose shrinking bone
Bursts through the veil of flesh it has outgrown?

THE FALLING TOWER, THOOR

STANLEY SNAITH

There stands the Tower, old, empty, damp of breath:
The walls that founded a poet's homeless myth
Deep in accepting earth,
The stair that was his spiral parable.
Here he drank of the dayspring of his youth,
And the *charisma* touched his sensual will.

The rooms that his creating mind endued
With a cherished delicacy and quietude
Become a house of storm.
The stair of the Tower, the winding stair of the brain,
Fall to the siege of the same embattled worm;
The dust that stops his eyes beclouds the pane.

The doom-charged page turned like the sibyl's leaves,
The hour of oblivion tolls. The spider weaves
A shroud for the rigoured passion;
Under the sinking roof the jackdaws nest—
The jackdaws, where an old man's eagle vision
Rode superb on the wrist.

WINTER SLEEP

PHOEBE HESKETH

Bind the winding sheet around
To close you in a cold cocoon;
Lay your dreaming mind aground
Shuttered beyond the sun and moon.

Then sleep through ageless nights and days
Until false dreams of love shall fade;
In one white daybreak you will raise
Your soul aware, yet unafraid.

Sleep till pain-hot barbs are cold
And mortal wounds are sealed with peace
Where cradled in the senseless mould
Longing, hunger, passion cease.

A blue flower breaks above your feet;
And from your heart a white one grows—
O, bloodless veins, than flesh more sweet
Is fragrance that outlasts the rose!

Beyond the winter dark there gleams
A dawn that will not own the grave,
A country where your mortal dreams
Are deathless with the life you gave.

A L'OMBRE D'UNE JEUNE FILLE EN FLEUR

PHILIP HENDERSON

Deep in the awakening nature of this young girl
Sleep the secret delights and hungers of the sea:
    Fabulous shapes of dream,
    The amazing fauna of desire.
O wind-flower of the water, anemone,
    Open in sensual delight
    To the cold touch of the sea!

In purple profusion and aqueous indigo gloom
The liquefaction of your tresses spread,
    Delisaria sanguinea,
    Laminarialles,
Liquid leaves in your marine noon,
    Take the unwary
    In mortal embrace.

Dragonish the soft vermilion fangs,
Tentacles of carnivorous desire,
    Delicate cyclops,
    Milky medusa,
Close upon the all-too-willing limbs
    On submarine beds
    Of silurian shale.

Wave-caressed to voluptuous indolence,
The impersonal loves of never-touching fish,
    Aurelia,
    Dalyellia,
Drift in dreams of pale spermatic smoke,
    Thrilled by the coral fire
    Of the cold blood's awakening.

LONDON NOCTURNE (II)

RANDALL SWINGLER

When the pubs close on the cross of the street
Lamp-posts lift up for pity or derision
Those who have foundered from setting their aims too high,
Whom common affection could not satisfy,
But must be saint or hero, till now
Because the pinching circumstance will not allow
Angels or hippogryffs to survive, they seek
The anodyne of happiness which creaks
In the marrow with the bat-voice and vulture-grin
Of alcoholic confidence in the pride of sin.

TO MY WIFE ON HER BIRTHDAY

G. S. FRASER

And that world uses us, and this world feeds:
That world of streets and arguments, our story,
Here merely lights against the darkening greens,
Here hung aloft in air, a coloured folly!

Which shall we choose, O tell me, who resemble
This quiet hillside in your body's ease
But, like those cities, in your mind's endeavour
Strain for the ordered artifice of peace?

And, since your mind is not your body's rival
And both in fortunate countries are in phase,
Say both, since moderation is your foible:
Human construction on a natural base.

This sleeping quilt of colours serves the cities
That shine like toys by night, or so he says
Who knows both worlds are one: I know that this is
My world, what natural wisdom I possess,

And back, my dear, in London I'll be turning
To you across the chatter and the smoke
And think in you I see the valleys curving
In the clear silence to the harvest floor.

THE MUSE

The late A. V. BOWEN

Anchises the olden
Was not so old as she.
The leafy dead blow golden
Below the churchyard tree;
But she
A handful of white ashes
Before the world was young
Still like the Daystar flashes
And lights upon my tongue.

THE DEAD GHOST

WRENNE JARMAN

There's a dead ghost on the stair! they cried.
I hastened. There at the head
Where the three steps led to the landing wide,
The phantom form was spread.

The dim white image lay still and prone
And flat as a paper frieze.
The ghost of the flesh and the ghost of the bone
Showed clear as a fossil tree's.

What did one do for a shade at all?—
Did one cross its hands on its breast,
Did one render it Christian burial
With mourning, wreaths and the rest?

I knelt to lift the departed one,
But it fell away under my hand
As a shadow melts with the faded sun,
As a hole disappears in sand.

To carry a lesson was that ghost's role:
That two deaths Man may see,—
Death of the body and death of the soul.
And the last death must not be.

EMBLEM FOR NUPTIALS

For J. and E. G.

JOHN WALLER

The cruelty of loving
Makes desperate fiction, is
The sinister plumed stranger
Luring to the abyss
Of glaciers, of drowning
Wayward in wantonness.

But you, whose world of roving
Dives to a surer bliss,
Follow the lucky dancers
Most envied still in this,
Whose love is clear and burning
As action, as the kiss.

SONNET

HERBERT CORBY

Madonna, the beauty lies forsaken now,
and gentle ghosts of guilt pervade the night
when you, uncaring, will believe each vow
like moons in water, drowned into the light:
and I shall be a lover, half in sleep,
and smooth a girl's hair fondly as we kiss,
and tell another girl the stars are deep:
—My darling, there is no betrayal in this.

For, though the laughing others shall possess
the country of my love their little while
from you my heart will know of loveliness:
and though they loved, and love was warm and deft,
your touch will dim their beauty, and your smile
shall be my soul when only death is left.

LINES FOR A CENTENARY

(Edgar Allan Poe *ob.* 7th October, 1849)

PHILIP JOHN STEAD

Publishers are sometimes useful to writers
But will not hear verse. Only women are kind.
I had my moments. Drawing-rooms heard me,
A one-eyed monarch of the female blind.

America read me. It made no difference.
The unmysterious lives stayed thin and clear,
Barren of magic. I moved to the castle,
Nourishing spectres, cultivating fear,

And building vaults for prisoners and tortures,
Resonant sepulchres, and sweating stone
Passages where vengeance led the antic
Up to the blank wall where he died alone.

My country was all countries but America,
My time all times except the Here-at-Home.
My venom cracked a goblet in Venice;
I knew both carnival and catacomb.

It made no difference. America
Agreed that I could write, could entertain,
Noting my curious vices, wanting no prophet
Who saw his truth in dreams, his peace in pain.

I was revenged upon America.
Baudelaire made the world believe I died
On the artist's cross of the cedars of Philistia.
A hundred years we kept it up. We lied.

I did not genuinely hate America.
People were often unnecessarily good
To me. Amusing, this centenary,
To admit that sometimes I was understood.

It does not matter much. We are all strangers,
However the mad biographers strive.
I know as little of myself today as ever
I did when I had the bother of being alive.

My masterpieces are stagey. Dusty properties,
Scenes and costumes that even then would hardly do,
And actors like waxworks . . . but the stage was dark with shadows,
And shadows are born of light.
The light was true.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT*

"Alice H. Bartlett, Poet, is Dead at 80" was a top of the column headline in *The New York Times* of September 15. The news was given in paragraphs in *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* with special reference to Mrs. Bartlett's long active association with The Poetry Society and *The Poetry Review* and it is to this phase of the many-sided activities of this distinguished, aristocratic, handsome descendant of one of the signatories of the Declaration of Independence, we must pay such tribute, factual rather than panegyrical, as attenuated space will permit in the pages she adorned.

For almost a third of a century without a break Mrs. Bartlett acted as American Editor of *The Poetry Review*, in each issue recording and appreciating "The Dynamics of American Poetry",—an unique feature and record in literary journalism. For as the *doyen* of American poets, Edwin Markham, pointed out in a biographical sketch appended to a collection of poetic plays reviewed in these pages in July 1947, after reviewing her early active life and distinctions, "Mrs. Bartlett's widest and perhaps happiest work dates from the creation of the American section of *The Poetry Review* . . . which has been a fine intermediary among poetry lovers of both continents".

On one of her several welcome visits to England Mrs. Bartlett was the charming, cheerful, proud recipient of the Poetry Society's Gold medal, awarded for exceptional services to the Society. She had other claims on recognition and memory. She published as a worker in poetry, as well as sympathetic criticism, several volumes of poems, largely based on life and experience and world-wide travel, of which the handsome volume *Mediterranean Ports* is perhaps the outstanding example. Examples of her skill as a celebrant sonneteer, appeared occasionally in *The Poetry Review*, *The New York Times* and other publications. Her more ambitious work in poetic drama brought her one outstanding triumph when the Bicentennial Commission for the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of George Washington, chose her "Washington Pre-eminent" as the basis of the great commemoration pageant in her capital. She published five other colourful and erudite plays on the achievements of world leaders, which have been presented or publicly read all over the United States in recent years. The war and its aftermath stultified plans for similar production in London.

Galloway Kyle.

*The following tribute has been prepared at the invitation of the General Executive Committee.—Editor.

AROUND MY SHELVES

1. NEW POEMS: 1889-1919

by

"Michael Field" (1846-1914, 1862-1913)
Sir Ronald Ross (1857-1932)
J. Meade Falkner (1858-1931)
Ernest Rhys (1859-1946)
Victor Plarr (1863-1929)
Arthur Machen (1863-1947)
John Gray (1866-1934)
Lionel Johnson (1867-1902)
Theodore Wratislaw (1871-1933)
AND
Richard Middleton (1882-1911)

Collated by a bibliophilic Member of The Poetry Society.

There is no greater solace for the bibliophile—even for one of small means—than to walk around his shelves, drawing a volume out, from here, from there, and recalling the place and price of its acquisition.

I was engaged in this harmless and pleasurable pursuit this evening, when the thought struck me that it might be of interest to communicate a few "finds"—poems and lighter verses by distinguished writers of the last half century—salvaged by the luck of magnetic fingers, to the pages which had recently enshrined valuable Scott and Henley discoveries. And so, in a bare half-hour, I culled this almost exclusively "Nineties" bouquet, a culling, it will be seen, that radiates the aura of that period of "the viol, the violet and the vine".

Let us take our authors chronologically.

Here, I draw out a copy of *Canute the Great: The Cup of Water,* inscribed "from M.F." to Havelock Ellis by "Michael Field" in October, 1887, a copy which bears inserted a later manuscript poem given to me by another of "Michael Field's" friends, their editor, T. Sturge Moore. Is it a poem addressed by "Michael" to "Field", or one from "Field" to "Michael"? Sturge Moore or Sir William Rothenstein would immediately have recognised in which handwriting the manuscript is. But, tonight, without visiting Mrs. Sturge Moore's files, I do not; yet, certainly, it is a personal "Michael Field" poem, a sonnet of recognisable quality, and written, as I compute from its envelope, late in the Beardsley decade:

Constancy

I love her with the seasons, with the winds,
As the stars worship, as anemones
Shudder in secret for the sun, as bees
Buzz round an open flower: in all kinds
My love is perfect, and in each she finds
Herself the goal; then why, intent to tease

And rob her delicate spirit of its ease,
Hastes she to range me with inconstant minds?

If she should die, if I were left at large
On earth without her, I, on earth, the same
Quick mortal with a thousand cries, her spell
She fears would break. And I confront the charge
As sorrowing, and as careless of my fame
As Christ intact before the infidel.

Now another book falls back into my hand, a small blue octavo first-edition by a past Vice-President of the Poetry Society: *Psychologies,* 1919, by Sir Ronald Ross, one of Sir Edward Marsh's "Georgians", but an author more greatly famed for the successful publication of his researches concerning malaria. The fly-leaf bears a typically witty inscription, dated December 14th, 1919, to a medical colleague:

To
Sir Norman Moore, Bart.
President, Royal College of Physicians

Kind Warden of the Triple Gate
Through which we first beheld the state
Of Æsculapius—god I hate
But follow still:
Despise not this half-ripen'd rhyme,
The product of an ampler time
Before he fixt my soul sublime
Within a Pill!

"The product of an ampler time"? Ross, no doubt, here refers to the fact that the last piece in his book, *The Boy's Dream,* "contains passages" from his *Edgar*, first published in Madras in 1883.

My searching eye next alights upon "association copy" first-editions of three fine novels, which I have been glad to note have been reprinted again since the late war: *The Lost Stradivarius* (1895), *Moonfleet* (1898) and *The Nebuly Coat* (1903). Who knows the poetry of their author, J. Meade Falkner? Sir Henry Newbolt in the first volume of his autobiography gives some report of him, but it is a cutting from an Edwardian catalogue of an American pirate-publisher (Thomas B. Mosher of Portland, Maine), inserted in the last volume, which records a sympathetic untitled piece of his verse for salvation and fresh appreciation:

What matter though my room be small,
Though the red lamp-light looks
On nothing but a papered wall
And some few rows of books?

For in my hand I hold a key
That opens golden doors,
At whose resistless sesame
A tide of sunlight pours

In from the basking lawns that lie
Beyond the boundary wall;
Where summer broods eternally,
Where the cicadas call.

There all the landscape softer is,
There greener tendrils twine,
The bowers are roofed with clematis,
With briony and vine.

There pears and golden apples hang,
There falls the honey-dew,
And there the birds at morning sang
When all the world was new.

Beneath an oak Menalcas woos
Arachnia's nut-brown eyes;
And still the laughing Faun pursues,
And still the Dryad flies.

And you may hear young Orpheus there
Come singing through the wood
Or catch the gleam of golden hair
In Dian's solitude.

So, when the world is all awry,
When life is out of chime,
I take the golden key and fly
To that serener clime:

To those fair sun-lit lawns that lie
Beyond the boundary wall:
Where summer broods eternally,
And youth is over all.

And now, nearby, a volume inscribed by one of The Rhymers' Club is noticed. It is *Ballads and Poems* (*1899*) by a non-Rhymer, Dora Sigerson (Mrs. Clement Shorter), and it bears a verse in the holograph of Ernest

Rhys, beloved editor of *Everyman's Library*, poet of "Wales England wed", an inscription, dated November 20th, 1902, that is most laudably, loyally Celtic:

To J.A.P.

To Arthur Price these rhymes of Eri,—
Dearbhorgie, Deirdre and White Rose,
And many a song of Fetch and Faerie
Are sent, their wildness to disclose.

The Banshee in them brings no token
Of sorrow,—but instead white peace;
Such is the spell within them spoken
Tonight by Grace and Ernest Rhys.

Mrs. Grace Rhys, it may be remembered, editing *A Celtic Anthology*, a quarter-of-a-century later, in 1927, included two of Dora Sigerson's poems.

And here are three volumes by another of The Rhymers' Club, the poet of *Epitaphium Citharistriæ*, Victor Plarr, long librarian of The Royal College of Surgeons, the "Eugenio" of Dowson's sole natal epigram, the dedicatee of Lionel Johnson's *Oxford Nights*, and the "Monsieur Verog" of Ezra Pound's *Siena Mi Fe; Disfecemi Maremma.*

In 1914, Plarr attempted to interest one of Dowson's aunts in his pioneering "reminiscences, unpublished letters and marginalia", *Ernest Dowson: 1888-1897*, to be published that year, and received a polite "snorter" for his pains. (Students will find this reply partly quoted on page 269 of Professor Mark Longaker's *Ernest Dowson, 1944.*) The letter, which found his book "distasteful", expressed "disapproval" of it, and declared a resolution "not to buy a copy", was too much for the devoted Eugenio's acquiescent acceptance; he annotated it with the following epigram therefore, and inserted the leaf for posterity in a copy of his book:

O grand Old Lady, how you hate
Your nephew's genius and his fate!
Finer it were if nephews died
And were as "Curates" deified!

The books of another contemporary of Ernest Rhys, a writer even more greatly honoured and prized by Wales, occupy the next eleven shelves—the books of Arthur Machen. Among them are transcript-manuscripts and corrected typescripts of his published poems: *Eleusinia* (1881); *Lines written on looking down from a Height into London on a Board School suddenly lit up the Sun* (1898: published 1906); *The Remembrance of the Bard* and *The Praise of Myfanwy* (1907: published, U.S.A., 1918) and, also, one written just after the completion of Machen's mighty *Casanova* translation in 1889, a poem that till now has not seen print:

An Excellent Ballad of the Arméd Man
very pleasant and profitable for the
Present Times

When the boughs were hung all meetly and the mantel was all fine
With the holly and the laurel, and the settle-seat did shine
Then there rose a carol about the board and this concért began,
As the firelight glowed, and the old ale flowed at the Sign of the Arméd Man.

Said one, "It fell upon a night when the winter wind was cold
That I strayed afar in the snow-drifts upon the weary wold,
But I saw a light before me, and that night I tippled a can,
For that lanthorn light was the window bright at the Sign of the Arméd Man."

And "I," quoth then another, "was far in Acquitaine
And a bitter field was stricken, and the shafts drove fast as rain
Yet I stoutly struck for my liege-lord, for my breast was fenced with a can
That I filched one night from the aumbrey light at the Sign of the Arméd Man."

"Grand mercy," quoth the Summoner, "one day hard by the wood
In the twilight of October when the leaves dripped red like blood
Three lusty robbers fell on me, but soon they turned and ran
For my battle cry that I raised on high was the Sign of the Arméd Man."

"It happened," said a sailor, "that upon a stony strand
My ship was wrecked and I was left alone in a lonely land,
But I lit upon a vineyard, and then—O my joy began!
For the vineleaves good they are cut in wood at the Sign of the Arméd Man."

"I will you wit," a Scholar spake, "ten years I sought and mo'
To read in ancient written books if the world do turn or no
Yet all this toil was labour lost, but bolting of bolted bran
For sure I found that the world turns round at the Sign of the Arméd Man."

The Association of Ideas! Arthur Machen dined Oscar Wilde at The Florence Restaurant. Where, then, are the manuscripts of John Gray, who denied he was "Dorian" yet signed one letter at least thus to Wilde? And those of his host at the Rhymers' Club, Lionel Johnson? And those of another of Johnson's guests there, Theodore Wratislaw?

Here is a poem of John Gray's; it is later than those in his exquisite *Silverpoints, Spiritual Poems* and his four *Blue Calendars,* being sent to "Michael Field" at Christmastide 1908, after its author had become a Catholic Priest and mounted to Edinburgh:

The Emperor and the Bird

Too sore upon a human frame: too great
This heavy priesthood, royalty, immense
Fatigue, the office of the exalted Bronze:
Lonely, endeavourless, terrific state,
From inattentive eyes too closely screened,
In sombre courts of adamant and bronze,
Time polished and from age to age pastured,
And quelling service all his recompense.

His sparrow, in the bronze air, where he plays,
Delighted, in much logic, with many a shrill
Contention, summoned, drops, a parachute:
By gardens and by devious covered ways
Sweeps silent, to the sacred hall addressed,
A satin flesh mailed mamelukes salute,
Wheels steadily to the Presence, greets his breast,
Waits gaily, back and forth, the sovereign will.

I have come upon the main group of 'go't books. Four by that young short-story writer of genius, Hubert Crackanthorpe, who was found drowned in the Seine, stand together. The copy of his first book *Wreckage* which he requested his publishers to send Lionel Johnson in 1893 (three years after Johnson had dedicated *Bronze* to him) is my quarry; for the fly-leaf contains in Johnson's hand the following inscriptions and unpublished poem:

Lionel Johnson
from
Hubert Crackanthorpe: 1893.

Sancte Huberte
ora
pro scriptore
Amico meo: 1894

Requiescat in pace: 1896
Miserere Jesu!
Refugium peccatorum ora pro nobis.

Ours is the darkness, thine the light:
And yet the haunting thought of thee,
O fair and cordial friend! makes bright
The darkness; and we surely see
Thyself, thy very form and face,
Filled with a fresh perfecting grace. *1897.*

Theodore Wratislaw's nine books are hard by. *Caprices*, 1893, with its two cancelled pages, 31-32, which first, as in Lord Esher's copy, contained *To a Sicilian Boy* and *L'Eternal Féminin* (in place of *Paradox* and *At Midnight*) is there among them awaiting substitution; and a bunch of ten uncollected or unprinted poems. One of these, the epigram which follows, was too lately discovered to be considered for inclusion in the posthumous *Selected Poems of Theodore Wratislaw*, 1935. It would appear from its subject to have been written at the close the First World War:

Epitaph
(*After Simonides*)

If noble death be valour's best reward,
This boon on us, of all men, Fate hath shed,
Who sprang, for England's freedom, to the sword
And here, in fame that grows not old, lie dead.

I have toured the walls of my first book-room and have reached the drawer of manuscripts from which my present Epilogue shall be drawn—the unpublished manuscripts of Richard Middleton. There are hundreds of them awaiting attention; but there is one which demonstrates his intrinsic connection with the "Nineties" and his sympathy with the writers of the days of his childhood. The poem is entitled *The Garden of Avallaunius* and is dedicated to Arthur Machen. It has a curious history. In March 1897, Arthur Machen, retired in the cloister of Grays Inn, completed his Epicurean, Paterian novel, *The Garden of Avallaunius* (now known as his masterpiece, *The Hill of Dreams*). In March 1904, it was set-up in page-proof by his friend Alfred Wareing, but never issued; and from July to December of the same year appeared as a serial in *Horlick's Magazine*, edited by his friend A. E. Waite.

On May 17, 1906, Machen joined the Tavern society "The New Bohemians" and met Richard Middleton, then aged twenty-three and clerking in the Royal Exchange Assurance Corporation. That they did not take to each other personally both Middleton's published letters and Machen's conversations have testified, but Middleton respected Machen's writing and Machen had hopes for Middleton's literary future. The signatures in the first minute-book of "The New Bohemians" prove a dozen encounters of the pair before the publication of Machen's novel, as *The Hill of Dreams*, by Grant Richards in February 1907. This fact leads to the conclusion that Middleton read the text either in a set of Wareing's proofs or Waite's magazine, probably borrowed from the urbane Machen, and composed his poem sometime in the second-half of 1906.

Admirers of *The Hill of Dreams* will note how closely the poet has kept to the pagan philosophy Machen expresses through the thoughts and speeches of his hero, Lucian Taylor:

The Garden of Avallaunius

To Arthur Machen

Dawn came to me unconscious. At my feet
The fresh glad earth lay broken for the seed
And my heart sang because the place was sweet,
"If this be life, then it is well to live.
I, being born, have nothing to forgive
In Him who waked me, be this life indeed!"

I set my garden with all pleasant flowers,
Red roses of my blood and lilies white
Of my clean heart, for me there were no hours—
Only a glad eternity of song;
I knowing not that God had wrought such wrong
Who tells his children nothing of the night.

So tended I my flowers, white and red,
Till in His Season, God remembered me
And all my flowers fell desolate and dead,
My earth became the desert sands of drouth,
The songs that had been honey in my mouth
The bitter waters of a Christian sea.

I sought those others, I that had sufficed
To fill with songs a world they never knew;
They showed the pallid picture of their Christ,
Patience in suffering, framed about with death.
And one poor flower they showed me, being faith,
From whose dim petals never sweetness blew.

But I fled back, and in the tuneful deep
Of old past things I sought my world again,
Glad songs of darkness and sweet flowers of sleep.
And lo! beneath my vision-sun's first beams
A new earth woke, a joyous place of dreams
Fair for the dawn and fresh with dewy rain.

And here I stay where beauty is no sin
And flowers forget the thorns that Jesus wore,
Where my glad mind may gather roses in
To bind them into garlands for the child
With singing mouth and great heart undefiled
Who wanders in the garden evermore.

T. W. RAMSEY, POET-PHILOSOPHER

THOMAS MOULT

When we speak of poetry nowadays it has to be remembered that the present generation cannot be expected to think in terms of Keats and Tennyson, Shelley and Meredith—even Swinburne—or any of the poets we describe as traditionalists. If they could, a garrulous contemporary who as critic and versifier never seems to get nearer to literature than the fringe of it would not dare to sniff at the "doggy adulation of dead modes," as he has done just lately. The average student since the first of the World Wars has been encouraged to believe that this is poetry:

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.
> If all time is eternally present
> All time is unredeemable.

"What might have been is an abstraction remaining a perpetual possibility only in a world of speculation"—I may as well continue the quotation by setting out those three further lines in prose! . . . Incidentally, "perhaps" and "if" are the operative words . . . A second example of what is being treated seriously, though not unanimously accepted as poetry, is worth adding before we turn to better things:—

> . . . and within the crystal, went up swift as
> Thetis
> in colour rose-blue before sunset
> and carmine and amber,
> spirit questi? personae?
> tangibility by no means *atasal*
> but the crystal can be weighed in the hand
> formal and passing within the sphere: Thetis,
> Maya, . . .

Poetry? Well, like Mrs. Gamp, lots of people ain't denijing of it. But some of them would welcome the assurance that, whatever the so-called modernists might say, there is also poetry in W. B. Yeats's pre-barebones phase, which was more or less contemporaneous with the extracts from Mr. T. S. Eliot and Mr. Ezra Pound I have just made. And in these lines:

> The gardens of the Moon are filled
> With crystal arrowheads that chime
> For leaves on twisted silver stems,
> Crusted with diamantine rime;
> With curled-up fronds of icicles,
> And all cold, bright, disdainful things,

With Dead Sea apples for their fruit,
And in their boughs no whisperings.

To sound the trumpet of assurance for the author of them, Mr. T. W. Ramsey, is to face the various cliques of the new mode with a challenge. The weapon upholding the challenge is a principle, one by which every work that is claimed as poetry must stand or fall. Mr. Ramsey is not the President of the Poetry Society without warranty; having accepted the principle instead of allowing himself to be the puppet of a mood that has become for many a fashionable habit, his poetry is the individual and independent interpretation of an individual and independent vision, never the expression of an idea, which involves thought, whereas the authentic poet feels and apprehends. Authentic poetry is the expression of an imaginative and emotional perception, and the intellect is only called into action when the poet begins his interpretation. Then, and only then, he may be as brainy and free of feeling as a military chief at work miles behind the battle, away from the chaotic front-line and all that happens there. Too often the verse-writing sophisticate of our day thrusts this principle aside and wins approval for the result of so doing; he persuades the pliable reader, and the student who wishes to be thought up-to-date, that the emotional and imaginative appeal is of less importance than the appeal to the intellect, however limited this may be. The consequence is a confusion between the verse-writer and the poet which has become so deplorable that, taking advantage of it, one modernist critic is able to applaud as "great" a contemporary piece already forgotten and another to take for granted that "maybe modern verse does not lend itself much to singing;" deplorable is the only word for the relative absence of that form of expression which has moved many generations in a unique way, the way that prose and verse, as distinct from poetry, can never do.

In Mr. Ramsey's four books we have a welcome manifestation of loyalty to the principle which leads to this form of artistic expression and alone results in poetry. First and foremost his poetry proclaims the dignity of man—and men; the beauty of Nature; and the ever-increasing, not decreasing, wonder of the world, including the hovels and gutters where human beings who can love so much are forced to live—"Saints in heaven—yes, but saints in slime; ah, that was the everlasting wonder!" So a prose-author of no mean renown, Jack London, wrote long ago, and if the artist does not recognise it in a world that has not rid itself of slime he is lost. Mr. G. Rostrevor Hamilton's remarkable new work, *The Tell-Tale Article,* a critical approach to poetry, contains this passage: "The value of poetry in any age is closely related to the current valuation of man, and, in particular, that without a sense of man's greatness to animate and ennoble the arts, we cannot expect of poetry either a fine exuberance

or a tragic force." Mr. Hamilton considers that the decline of this valuation more than anything else has been a deadlier factor in weakening English poetry during the last fifty years. We may forgive a writer for his waywardness, his flouting of the technical tradition in poetry, his solemn pronunciations that poetry about the dignity of Man and the beauty of Nature is finished, and that aeroplanes and chimneys, engineering inventions and scientific devices, are the only material for a poet in our time. We may even forgive him for his dreary cleverness, which Mr. Geoffrey Johnson illustrates in his recently published essay on *The Composition of English Poetry* by quoting, deliberately and mockingly, what must be one of the silliest bits of smart writing ever perpetrated, although the writers of the day who strive to emulate it are many:

> Now Autumn with a frosty swish
> Swoops wide the tight zip-fasteners of the bean.

We could forgive these failings if only the modernist, so-called, had a humbler, less superior attitude towards his fellow-man. Contempt for all humanity never inspired a true poem. Mr. Ramsey cannot be described as an anti-modernist, he is by no means a die-hard, a mere conventionalist, but he cannot by any stretch of argument be accused of blasphemy against the human spirit. In a poem beginning "Man was made in the image of God" he describes how, when "divinity informed the clod," it turned to worship such lovely images as "winds and jewelled flowers" and, in the seas:

> White coral, red anemones,
> And vast grey shapes leviathan,
> Burning with fires Promethean
> In depths unfathomed, and set far
> Below the light of sun or star.

Not yet has man made divine images of his turbines and pistons... Only a poet with Mr. Ramsey's attitude to the common man could have written so delicately as he has done in *Triads,* where he pictures three things "too frail to be touched without spoiling:" the bloom on the grape, the pale snow petal, and "the thin web the toiling, precise spiders shape." He goes on to co-relate them with three other things, too wide for the mind to grasp, two of which are the intricate courses of the stars, and "the profound heart of man."

This is the stuff of poetry, and it was first given in a slender volume in Macmillan's series of Contemporary Poets, *Antares,* 1934. Since then Mr. Ramsey has published *Four Witch-Balls, Endymion to Silver,* and *Fire and Ice,* the last-named being dated 1946. As the author has developed in technique and clarified his mature vision he has inevitably become a philosopher as well as a lyric poet, but his philosophy has always been translated into imaginative and musical phrasing. It has never become turgid or vague, however, and never bulked into verse-form, rawly and

obtrusively:

The highest mountain-tops have whitest snow
And blind the eyes that look on them too long;
Life is the price of naked truth, but love
Will sell the blinding jewel for a song.

Not only does the poet's world contain joy and beauty, but also everything that is implied in these lines—much of pity and terror, more of disillusionment and sorrow, most of the burden imposed on men and women who, brave and noble beyond the calculation and purpose of whoever or whatever created them, and living still under the moon and sun, are yet no less fragile of substance than "one dead" is. Nor does he refuse to see humanity in its dustier shapes. In one of his latest poems God speaks thus of his creation:

I made them only a little lower
Than my angels, but they, desiring power,
Made themselves lower than the lowest one
And used their best gift to darken my sun.

And in another recent piece, unusually rich in its irony, Lucifer instructs Adam:

You must love your children
And teach them then
How to be heroes
And to kill other men.

Three more volumes are awaiting the publisher's signal: *Ballade in C Sharp Minor, Cameo*, and *The Silver Key*. I have had the opportunity of reading them, and thereby of completing my study of the work of a poet who has come to his full stature without shirking the spirit's great issues, without failing to realise the human tragedy as well as the human comedy —how closely related they are!—and at the same time knowing no cynicism (mean perversion of irony); and above all refusing to let life's bitterness stain the shining marble of his quiet, serene joy. Mr. Ramsey's vision may not exclude a knowledge of a certain disintegration in the world, but it is not a vision of a world disintegrated. Technically he sympathises with those who go all out for the contemporary idiom and, moreover, he does not hesitate to use it when the humour or the perception requires; but he is a traditionalist because he has no illusions about the meaning of "free verse," he uses blank verse at its proper value and avoids preserving anything that is a mere repetition of what has been said before or, after due consideration, is felt to be not worth saying or saying in a poet's way:

Frost is the quietest thing that grows;
All in a night it comes to leaf
And flower more perfect than the rose—
So firm its stem and yet so brief.
Its seed is quite invisible

Its passing smells not of decay
When in the light the mutable
Thin petals quietly pass away.

In this poem *December* there is nothing to justify a reader's criticism that however imperfect the expression may be—such words as "quite" and "its" may be questioned—the observation could have been made more fittingly or more usefully in prose. Such tests as are implicit in the above comments must confront every poet or would-be poet and even if he manages to avoid them his discerning readers won't!

It was my privilege to include in the collection of *The Best Poems of 1942* a contribution by Mr. Ramsey. I reproduce it here:

The creeping minutes crawl across the page;
My mind is quiet now, or in its cage

Softly and swiftly paces up and down
—It makes no sound, so stealthy it has grown—

Trying the lock, the bars, now here, now there,
Seeking the wide night and the open air;

All its impatience but in movement shown,
In the mute stealthy pacing up and down:

Listening, crouching now with bristling hair,
Hearing what faint sound borne upon the air?

No sound, but merely the ghost of a sound
Holds its lithe suppleness close to the ground.

For in the darkness, somewhere very far,
One sighed, it may be—and thought leapt at bar

And lock once more; but pitiful and vain
Are claws on steel, and thought lay down again.

Black Panther withstands the ordeal of recollection. And if I were to ask Mr. Ramsey to describe his personal method of perception and interpretation he could hardly do better than refer to this poem. But he would qualify it with a change towards its climax if he wished to keep to the method which he knows in his own writing. As Mr. Johnson writes:

> "The half-vacant playing with words and phrases that happen to dance into the mind will make them spring into flame; they may perish utterly in the molten heat later begotten, but they have served the poet's purpose; the golden mood is come again and an angel walks in its fire."

POETRY IN AUSTRALASIA

5. DOUGLAS STEWART (b. 1913)

PHILIP LINDSAY

Even more than with other poets in this series, I find the limits of space exasperating now that I reach Douglas Stewart, so varied have been his achievements, and so great. Reluctantly, I must practically ignore his poems and ballads except to say that he has brought vitality and a new vision to forms becoming stereotyped by imitators of Lawson and Paterson.* One verse from *The Dosser in Springtime* must stand to show what poetry and gusto he can bring to ballardy:

> That girl from the sun is bathing in the creek,
> Says the white old dosser in the cave.
> It's a sight worth seeing though your old frame's weak;
> Her clothes are on the wattle and it's gold all over,
> And if I was twenty I'd try to be her lover,
> Says the white old dosser in the cave.

That one verse, a meagre portion from a banquet, must suffice to show how he has revivified a dying form, while we turn to those works in which lie his true greatness, his verse-plays. There are four of these, two for the radio and two for the stage, and although these radio-plays have been broadcast not only in Australia but in Eire and Canada, the B.B.C. as yet has had no ears to listen. Of these verse-plays, *Ned Kelly* and *Shipwreck* have both been performed on the Australian stage and there are strong hopes that the latter will be acted in London before long. It remains his masterpiece to date, a work not only of strong drama but of subtle characterisation so that all the men and women, even the least important, stand out clearly as individuals.

The story has been taken from history, the wreck of Pelsart's ship on the west coast of Australia in 1629; and there, lost in a strange world, the men and women find themselves helpless before passions long concealed in their hearts. Led by the supercargo, Cornelius, the crew mutinies after Pelsart has sailed for Java to seek help, the loyal men are killed and the wine and women seized and shared, only for Pelsart at last to return, a dying man, to bring back order as a hangman. Under the action runs the theme implicit in all Stewart's work, that men and women are led by

* Apart from small books of early poetry, Stewart has published *The Fire on the Snow* and *The Golden Lover*, both 1944; *The Dosser in Springtime*, 1946; *Glencoe, 1947* (all from Angus and Robertson, Castlereagh Street, Sydney, and 48 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1.), and *Ned Kelly*, 1946, and *Shipwreck*, 1947 (both from The Shepherd Press, Yurong Street, Sydney).

a dream which can carry them to heroism or disaster. In *The Golden Lover,* based on a New Zealand legend, it is the girl Tawhai who is lured from tribe and husband by the lover she meets in the woods, the dream of women, the god who comes to carry her to a paradise of endless delights. But in the final act with her husband and family and tribe pleading with her to stay with them, the Golden Lover comes to claim her and Tawhai remains poised in torment as many a woman has stood in anguished indecision between lover and husband, passion and marital security. The witch-doctor, Te Kawau, alone speaks to her with the voice of reason against the lament of her people and the pleading of her lover, telling her to cherish her dream but to remain at home; and in despair, she chooses home.

In *The Fire on the Snow* the dream is of man's courage and achievement, Scott and his comrades struggling to the South Pole with Oates going out heroically to die, but Scott:

> The dreamer knows he is master,
> As every dreamer has been
> Who ruled men's minds or bodies
> Who had no will of their own.
> Nothing the future bodes
> Or the past has done can hurt
> The hour when the dreamer walks
> Alive in the dream of his heart.
> Who will quench the delight that wakes
> When the master knows he is master?

Again, in *Ned Kelly,* the tale of the rebel lads who turned bushrangers and thought to fight Australia, they are men drawn remorselessly by the dream of the leader. Dan Kelly, Byrne and Hart are nothing but creations of Ned's will, and the torment is that Byrne knows it, yet cannot break free. Dan, a simple fellow, remains content under his brother's mastery while sullenly Hart submits to it with occasional mutterings of revolt; but Byrne, the gay seducer, the thinker, realises that he and his mates are doomed men and that he cannot escape, until at last he is shot, almost deliberately offering himself in an act of half-conscious suicide. The dream of Ned has destroyed him and he puts aside the armour they have hammered from plough-shares, but Ned, fearless because he knows himself already a legend, lumbers out of the pub in which they are besieged to face his enemies who shoot him in the legs, the only parts of his body unprotected. Byrne does not try to stop him walking to certain death, knowing that one cannot fight a dream, but he warns Ned that if he goes out he will die:

BYRNE: There's more than traps out there. There's all Australia.
All the little angry men we've set by the ears,
Like Living and Curnow; and the big men we've defied;

And the men we've killed, Kennedy, Scanlon and Lonergan,
They're waiting out there for you to open that door.

NED: I'm sick of your whining.

BYRNE: I'm sick of myself tonight,
Sick of the things I've seen and the things we've done,
That boy killed . . . for what? For being with the Kellys,
Watching the Kellys, touching the Kellys, breathing
The air the Kellys poison. There's death in our breath,
We poison sunlight and lamplight. Outside that door
Are the clean men we've laughed at, the honest men
Who live at peace with their neighbours, whose peace we've broken.
We've made a mess of it all, and now they've got us.

NED: It's late and too late to be crying for what we've done;
It's what we do next that matters.

BYRNE: It's what we did.
Kennedy, Scanlon and Lonergan had wives and children.

Here can be seen the strong simplicity of Stewart's verse which has rid itself of the lush imagery into which Elizabethan drama degenerated, learning from Browning and *The Cenci*, his dialogue being both poetic and realistic which can be convincingly spoken, and that is no small achievement. The same easy verse, appearing so simple and for that reason so difficult to write, becomes the idiom of the characters and its rhythm often alters to suit the speaker. And all his creations are individuals, not stock-figures. In *Shipwreck* we have the wealthy gentleman, haughty and scornful of the mob that kills him that Cornelius might possess his wife, the beautiful haughty Lucretia; the parson, Sebastian, and his daughter, Judith, who is weary of poverty and tormented with desire for love and freedom which she finds, to both her shame and triumph, in the brutal mutineer, Huyssen; the butler who knows himself a coward yet rises bravely to the moment when it comes: all are living, and the tension of the play lies mainly between Cornelius—a character worthy of Dickens or Shakespeare—and Lucretia whom eventually he takes after she fails to kill him. With this open conflict of lust and hate runs the tale of Judith and her lover, while her father, the wretched parson, is cajoled and bullied into guardianship of the women only to find he has become a brothel-keeper; hoping to bring peace, he discovers he has betrayed his friends; and finally he learns that he has been pander to his own daughter. This last and terrible revelation brings dignity to one whom we have despised after he takes the knife mockingly offered and with it kills his daughter's lover. To make a precis of such a tale is impossible, the plot being unimportant although the tension holds one until the final curtain; it is the revelation of character and the simplicity of the blank verse, which makes *Shipwreck* a masterpiece—and I do not use that word casually, by any means. It is a masterpiece, this world-in-little

shown to us with men and women given for a brief while their dreams, finding themselves quit of their masters and the law, petty kings until the reckoning: as one of the mutineers cries at Pelsart during his trial:

Yes, remove me:
The prisoner, the clod, the poor bloody lump of dirt
Called David Seevanck that lived its hour in the sun.
Take it, hack it, put a rope round its neck and choke it
And leave it to swing while you sail to your fair ladies.
It won't even wave goodbye. No hand, you see?
The Commodore's taking that. Well, you can have it:
It's a book I've read too often. What it says on the palm
Is rope, chain, axe, the rub of the oar,
Sun, rain, wind, salt-water, snow,
The touch of iron and wood, no pretty reading,
But a life that took the fine young hand of a boy
And beat and crumpled it crooked like the foot of an eagle
Till it grew too stiff to salute; but learned instead
—And glad to do it—the feel and the use of the knife.
Yes, I killed with my hand: so there'd be water
For my shipmates, the men who were left to die
While their Commodore sailed for Java.

Alas, snippets can give no impression of the whole, but for those who lament the doldrums of so much poetry today, its sinking into weariness with life or seeking refuge in religion or political revolt in its despair, should turn to Stewart's work. There will be found a new true Elizabethan with all the gusto and passion of those men of the Renaissance; and I believe that it was no accident that he should be a New Zealander now resident in Sydney. The Elizabethan spirit which sought endless dangers, unknown worlds of adventure over the skyline, is being reborn out there on the edges of a vast ocean and with the frightening unknown prehistoric continent of Australia at men's backs to be explored and conquered.

POETS' GROUP OF POETRY SOCIETY

The undersigned announce the formation of a Group, dedicated to furthering the work of active Poets within the Society.

It will be a symposium at which poets will gather "to hear each other's work and discuss the spirit and substance of poetry". Fuller details will be given in the next issue of *The Poetry Review*. The first meeting will be held at 7-30 p.m. on Wednesday 14th December, 1949 at the Studio Club, Knightsbridge, S.W.1:

Leigh Henry, Ph., D., — John Graddon.
Thomas Moult. — T. H. Foley.

SHORT REVIEWS

The Complete Poems of John Skelton edited by Philip Henderson. (Dent 12s. 6d.). *Poems by John Skelton* selected and edited by Roland Gant. (Grey Walls Press, 3s. 6d.).

Apart from a selection in 1815 and Dyce's antiquarian edition of 1843, there was little of Skelton to be seen until the present century. Now he has become more than an academic target for respect. A second, revised printing of Mr. Henderson's edition appears together with a selection from the indefatigable Grey Walls Press. The ground of Skelton's appeal to the nineteen thirties is simple. Mr. Henderson takes us back to that ineffably remote decade through one sentence of his introduction, descriptive of Skelton's hard-breathing satirical exercises. "But they are saved from slipping over into doggerel by the poet's fine ear and a remarkable rhythmic dexterity that often amounts to sleight of hand, so that many of them, *as Auden has remarked,* have the air of successful conjuring tricks." The delicate period charm of that sentence is already a little forced. Fascinatingly mysterious—at the time of Auden's efforts to egalitarianise poetry—must have been the pure fact that Skelton—*Orator Regius*—, he, whom Erasmus termed "the one light and ornament of British letters", should pass from rather shabby aureate verses to semi-popular satire, full of enjoyable pedantry and mild coarseness. This was —as Mr. Henderson puts it—"coming to grips with the life of his times", attacking the apathy and concupiscence of the Church, making himself a nuisance generally. Like many who are farther than they think from the centre of power Skelton had no notion of the way things were going; of the way they had indeed already gone. It is this tragedy—the tragedy that lost us so many florid manuscripts; so many superb buildings—which makes Skelton's satires sad reading in the teeth of their exuberance and individuality. Nor does this sadness give an ironic twist to them. They are the efforts of the conjuror: the professional "delighted to deceive you." A temperamental levity in Skelton always breaks through the facade of indignation. His difficult personality forced him into attitudes of snarling protest and nagging prescience; but his satires are not what they affirm themselves to be—moral. The relation of his ideas to his life can be felt by his later ungainly fawning on Wolsey.

Mr. Gant tells us in his introduction that " . . . as a poet holding a strong place in English poetry between the Middle Ages and the Elizabethans he towers above all his contemporaries." True enough: but a fact rather about his contemporaries: the somewhat pallid Hawes; the tedious Barclay; the amateur, Sir Thomas More. One has only to com-

pare him with the Scots, Dunbar and Douglas, to find the mountain become a molehill.

And yet his work does radiate variety: the always delightful *Philip Sparrow,* at once mocking and tender; *The Bowge of Court;* the lyricism; and—if it be his—the Passion poem *Woefully arraid.* Here we seem to be moving among the sensuous mysticism of Richard Rolle and his school.

Neither of these two editions is for the student. Mr. Gant's text is based on Dyce; Mr. Henderson's, radically modernised, has a useful introduction and notes, although these are the reverse of elaborate.

IAIN FLETCHER.

Sixty Poems by Alexander Petöfi (1823-1849). Translated into English verse by Eugenie Bayard Pierce and Emil Delmar. (Distributors: Johannes Press, New York. $2.50).

In his life and in his work, Petöfi Sandor, has approached very closely the possible ideal of a romantic poet. At twenty, he was already the acknowledged great lyricist of Hungary, he was happy in love and carried away the Squire's daughter to be his young bride, he was a leading figure in the War of Independence and died on the battle-field at the age of twenty-nine. Since his death, the successive generations of Hungarian boys and girls have learned to see and understand the formative period of modern Hungary through Petöfi's songs and verses. For here is poetry rooted in the land, blood and language of Hungary, speaking for ever to those who inherit that country's destiny. Petöfi is a born, or shall I say natural poet, and these songs have the freshness of the plains, of a morning, when in May the air is heavily scented with the flowers of the Acacia trees and a breeze blows from the meeting of rivers. Petöfi describes the simple people of his native countryside, farmers, lads in the tavern, the shepherd on the donkey, all these scenes felt and described with spontaneity and a freshness only equalled by Burns. His language is quiet as the murmur of inland waters, his images are fleeting reflections naturally produced by the climate of his vision. There is nothing laboured in him, he is the healthy poet, whose breath is fresh, whose imagination is healthy, and whose fluency is the result of love not drugs. In fact, his language is the first spontaneous eruption of a new language, the language of the simple farmers and tradespeople of the Plains, rushing past the heavy deposits of latin-bound Magyar-cum-German. The Translators have fought bravely with insurmountable difficulties and have produced good results notably with the more satirical poems, like *The Magyar Nobleman* (p. 25). I regret to say that some of the light lyrics lapse into Headwaiter's English, and here the joint powers of the Translators do not seem to be equal to the task. What is the good of printing lines like:

My rose hurt me very much,
Made me angry very much,
Sad and angry as could be,
That's the way I used to be.

Now Petöfi's simplest lines are not as simple as all that. Hungarian is an inflected language, and one word in Hungarian may contain three or four words in English. Also the spoken language is more image-saturated than other western tongues and this would require some compensation in translating. On the whole, the translators shy off images and fasten on rather worn idiomatic phrases. They translate: "The Plan That Came To Naught", when the original Magyar says: "My Plan Went Up In Smoke". Why? As this selection was published under the auspices of the Petöfi Society of Budapest, there is a disproportionate number of Petöfi's political poems included here. These poems may be welcome behind the Iron Curtain, but they are the Poet's weak points. He was too young, too enthusiastic to be able to meet his own Zeitgeist with a critical intelligence capable to correct and resist the revolutionary extravaganza of his Age. So he wrote poems glorifying the People and expecting the Millennium, once all Kings were hanged. In fact, after the end of the Revolution, in which he was killed, a new Hungary emerged under the rule of the Hapsburgs, which for about sixty-five years enjoyed a peaceful prosperity, never equalled before. A hundred years have gone by since Petöfi was killed by Russians fighting against Hungarian Independence. The Russians are again, once more, in Hungary, now not as reactionary troops, but as self-appointed guardians of a "greater freedom". Poets have a chance of being killed once more in fighting for Freedom. When will poets learn to keep way from Politics? What would Petöfi say, if he were alive to-day? Alas! I am afraid that however great the lyrical power, the political wisdom would again be negligible.

Let me end by thanking the Translators for their effort to bring Petöfi, at least some of him, within the reach of the English-speaking Nations. Once, in a very remote past, as a little boy in a Hungarian Latin school I won a prize, by reciting a Petöfi poem, (*The Moon's complaint at being addressed by Poets*). Some of that thrill came back when reading through this anthology.

JOSEPH BARD.

The Life and Times of Coventry Patmore by Derek Patmore. (Constable, 15s.)

Coventry Patmore: Selected Poems, edited by Derek Patmore. (Crown Classics, Grey Walls Press, 3s. 6d.)

In an age so smugly hypocritical as the Victorian it is fitting that a favourite poet should have been Coventry Patmore, at once so sicken-

ingly "Sunday Album with forget-me-nots" in *The Angel in the House* and so passionately forward in pursuit of his own sensual happiness in the more active country of life itself.

He was married three times, enjoyed an extraordinary friendship with a Tennyson still mourning the death of Arthur Hallam, and in his old age entertained a passion so violent for the married poetess, Alice Meynell, that she was forced to break off their relationship.

Significantly he kept in his library, hidden away behind the shelves, a complete set of the privately printed publications of the *Eroticon Biblion Society*. From these he presumably learnt that passionate intercourse with women was often improved if accompanied by whipping.

> "How should great Jove himself do else than miss
> To win the woman he forgets to kiss;
> Or, won, to keep his favour in her eyes,
> If he's too soft or sleepy to chastise."

It is lines like these that perhaps explain why Patmore's second major work, *The Unknown Eros* did not attain to the same universal popularity in his lifetime as the earlier *The Angel in the House*, though it contained much finer poetry, a fact appreciated by the critics of the 'nineties who were not all blinded by the amiable puritan picture of the respectable Victorian fireside.

Coventry Patmore, however, has his niche in literature, in that he nursed and cherished a minor talent into a small, live flame. If his earlier work is the usual Victorian family mask, he has perhaps the excuse that he did not know it to be a mask at the time (despite his brutality to his eldest son, Milnes, who never forgave him) and his later work did expose to some extent what might be found under the flowered antimacassars.

No, Coventry Patmore wrote honest before he died, even though the picture may not be an appealing one, as the Victorian picture most generally *is not,* evèn though he did unwisely destroy his long prose work, the *Sponsa Dei*, on the significance of physical love in religion. And we are to be thankful too that his great grandson, Derek Patmore, has been equally honest in his biography, concealing nothing, and in a very readable book has provided a sympathetic background for his ancestor's poetry.

It is a pity that Coventry Patmore lived in the Victorian Age or that living in it he should have lost so early his first wife, Emily, for whom he obviously cherished his deepest and purest affection. And yet, had Emily lived, there would have been no sensuous or religious experiment, no *Unknown Eros*. It is the old problem—Art or Happiness; one cannot have both.

JOHN WALLER.

Requiem and other Poems by Rainer Maria Rilke, translated by J. B. Leishman (Hogarth Press, 8s. 6d.)

Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan and Isolde, translated into rhyming English Verse by Edwin H. Zeydel (Princeton University Press, (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 22s.).

The Doom of the Gods by Ha Rollo, A Drama on Norse Mythology. (Williams and Norgate, 12s. 6d.)

Mr. J. B. Leishman's translations of three *Requiems* and part of *Buch der Bilder* and *Neue Gedlichte*, under the title *Requiem* are as contemporary translation goes, adequate versions in a medium which is a passable substitute for English poetry. For the reader who does not read German the book is indispensable—and I feel that every self-respecting *literaire* should study Rilke carefully and learn from that remarkable sensibility whatever is good to learn, and to discriminate the rest. Mr. Leishman's translations are nearly literal line for line, and could be used as a crib by the reader whose German is rudimentary rather than accomplished. In the absence of a poet proper undertaking the work there is no major objection to be raised against these versions, though I think it a serious pity that he seems to have a monopoly at least in book-form to print translations of Rilke's poetry.

Of the versions in this volume, even in English quite a dozen are outstandingly beautiful poems. The most successful ones are generally descriptive poems or poems of reminiscence—those demanding a greater penetration into Rilke's awareness of other modes of being and contemplation lend themselves less to Mr. Leishman's talents. Where his language is natural, as for example in *The Unicorn,* he is highly successful (yet compare say W. B. Yeats' *Leda* or Charles Williams' *Taliessin's Song of the Unicorn* to see just how different a job of it the real poet makes!), but when he commits Germanisms like "us-interpreters" or persists in an unnatural mannerism like the repeated use of the word *yonder*, he can be exasperating.

The fact is, as must be apparent from the above remarks, Mr. Leishman has just stopped short of creating a style in English suitable for the translation of Rilke. The necessary accomplishment demands a consistent attitude to the task, and this he fails by a small margin to attain.

In presenting his translation of the *Tristan and Isolde* of Gottfried von Strassburg, Mr. Edwin A. Zeydel does just what one would expect a scholar, especially an American scholar, to do. He gives us all the available statistics about the poet, his sources, his dates, the tendencies, (Oh yes we *must* have tendencies), not to mention a list of poems and pieces of music based on the Tristan legend! About the poetry and its living reality, its place in the society of its time, we read not a word,

though we are told that Jessie L. Weston made a prose abridgement nearly fifty years ago which "does not afford even an inkling of the power and poetical values in Gottfried's story and in the music of his language". However that may be (and I for one disagree violently with this opinion), Professor Zeydel has chosen from the nineteen thousand lines of the original the "most appropriate third, including most of the 'high-spots', completely unexpurgated". I am not quite sure what Professor Zeydel means by the "high-spots", but if my suspicions are right, I am even less impressed by the decision of the Princeton University Press to print his version.

Professor Zeydel's translation is faithful to the original in literal meaning, yet in spite of the great beauty of Gottfried's poem (and it is one of the most delightful narratives of the whole Middle Ages) these two hundred pages of rhymed English verses are an intolerable bore.

I remain more than ever of the opinion that where the quality of the original cannot be reproduced in English verse, it is better to create a prose version (in entirety where possible), and leave the joys of the pure poetry to the imagination of the reader. Professor Rieu's *Odyssey*, Miss Sayer's *Thomas*, the Temple *Dante* don't after all make bad reading at all, and in the absence of a translator of genius like Fitzgerald in his *Omar*, Dryden in his *Vergil*, Pope in his *Iliad*, these nearly literal prose renderings are invaluable.

In fact, to expect to make an English poem out of *Gottfried* without resuscitating the lost art of the harp or other accompaniment and the unknown style of intonation, is ludicrous. One cannot but see the translator as typical of the contemporary academy at its worst, and then good naturedly salute his patience.

The Doom of the Gods is the second part of a dramatic version of *The Edda of Asgard* by a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature who adopted the pseudonym of "Ha Rollo." In this part each of the episodes brings nearer the twilight of the gods, the doom when evil apparently triumphs. But "Ha Rollo" in her epilogue declares that she found running through these Northern Tales a "silken thread" giving promise of a restored Golden Age. This prompted her to her life-long devotion to the subject.

I am suspicious of people who find silken threads as I am intolerant of members of any society, institution or other conspiracy who expect their amateurish poetic amusements to be printed. Plays in twenty odd acts and Hel knows how many scenes in how many unspecified places, with several decades of characters, written in verse, and having for theme the most tenuous suggestion of a vague vision of a Golden Age are not to be encouraged. Sincerity—whatever that may be—is no excuse.

PETER RUSSELL.

The Pisan Cantos by Ezra Pound (Faber, 12s. 6d.

Despite his plight, Mr. Pound must be counted a singularly fortunate man. Without the publicity of notoriety, he might never have earned widespread public acclaim. He might have remained as he began, the central figure of a small and precious cult. Even in the wider literary circles, he was for long regarded (along with anglo-catholicism and cheese) as one of Mr. Eliot's minor eccentricities. For many *politicos* of the extreme left, who tend often to a reactionary conservatism where any of the arts is concerned, Mr. Pound is a properly caged fascist beast and "an intellectual capitalist" to boot! But even the general public,—always tolerant of artists and other ex-enemies, once it is assured that they have been safely deprived of their wits,—has yet no inkling of the extent to which its culture has been nourished by Mr. Pound. Meanwhile *The Pisan Cantos* have made several kinds of stir. On p. 112 occurs the much-quoted passage which everyone has already recognised as being pure poetry, and which is clearly destined to secure for Mr. Pound, via the anthologies, poetic immortality: I mean the passage which contains the lines:

> What thou lovest well remains
>
> and: the rest is dross . . .
>
> Pull down thy vanity, it is not man
> Made courage, or made order, or made grace,
> Pull down thy vanity, I say pull down.
> Learn of the green world what can be thy place
> In scaled invention or true artistry . . .

In these and other lines from the present volume, those who are familiar with Mr. Pound's previous work will detect a new, mature and poignant note which could have been produced only by that deep suffering which the Chinese long ago desiderated as a *sine qua non* of great poetry. Those hitherto unfamiliar with the verse of Mr. Pound should however be warned against possible disappointment, and advised to begin on the newly reissued *Selected Poems*, with Mr. Eliot's indispensible introduction. For the remainder of this volume is in general, and on the surface, of very different texture. As with earlier volumes of the *Cantos*, pages at a time are peppered with more or less obscure quotations, references, names, slang; tags of French, Italian, Latin, Provençale, Spanish, German; Greek in upper and lower case: Chinese ideograms well or ill delineated by several hands; and there is even a Persian name, drawn apparently by a Chinese caligrapher, in the arabic script. In this close-knit jungle one cannot yet see the pattern of a wood, but there are rare orchids as well as familiar trees. The *Cantos* are not yet complete. Much of their substance is highly allusive. Much that is clear enough to some of us now will seem obscure to the generation after next, which is likely to seek out and reconsider the

value of the total *opus*. It is thus to be hoped that someone is already at work on a complete key. There are recurrent *leitmotivs*. Something coherent can be divined, but has yet to be made wholly articulate. As with the later work of Joyce, this is NOT merely the maundering of an erudite eccentric in his dotage. Nor is Mr. Pound merely a clever and learned wit: he is a sage, whose wisdom, courage and integrity are above the common level. It is this indisputable fact that gives the *Cantos* their main value. Together they may be said to comprise a long informal poem to end all long informal poems. They also have the interest of all autobiography of genius: the documentary interest of personal and literary reminiscence over a period of four momentous decades. And they afford invaluable maginalia on world history viewed from an economic-cum-cultural angle. Or one may ignore all that, at one's peril and to one's loss, and concentrate on the poetry as poetry. To anyone who ever heard the gruff, gentle, unforgettable voice of this sage from Buffalo, this is poetry that reads itself aloud without the slightest monotony. Rich in rhythmic variety, it is also rich in imagery. If much of its content must for most stay inaccessible, well: "What thou lovest well remains"; and if "the rest is dross" to many, it should nevertheless be approached ("Pull down they vanity, I say pull down") with due humility.

HUGH GORDON PORTEUS.

Contemporary Irish Poetry, edited by Robert Greacen and Valentine Iremonger (Faber, 8s. 6d.)

Poetry Ireland: The Midnight Court, a new translation by Lord Longford (Trumpet Books, 2s.)

The Ambleside Book of Verse, chosen and edited by E. W. Parker (Longmans, 6s.)

The Poet's World, edited by James Reeves (Heineman, 6s.)

English poets have grown used to the invasion of their tongue by the Welsh and the Scots. They have even suffered criticism from Continental and Indian gentlemen, who lecture them upon their lack of feeling for their own language. Now it is the turn of the Irish, and if the stolid Anglo-Saxon is tempted to point out that the best sight any of these aliens ever see is the prospect of an English publisher, it is, no doubt, due solely to the fact that he is a prophet unhonoured in his own country.

Robert Greacen, however, is a welcome visitor and the collection of poems which he has made with Valentine Iremonger is of a high quality. Their book is "concerned to show the main trends in contemporary Irish poetry since Lennox Robinson's *Golden Treasury of Irish Verse*. In particular . . . to present a cross-section of poetry by Irishmen since the death of W. B. Yeats in 1939." The emphasis is upon poems by young and living writers.

It is always difficult to pick out the most important poets in such a selection, because an unknown poet with perhaps two good lyrics carefully selected by a good editor is apt to out-shine the four or five competent poems by the familiar poet, If, therefore, I prefer John Hewitt and Patrick MacDonogh to the customary jingles of MacNeice or the top-heavy eccentricities of W. R. Rodgers, it may be because the latter are heavily represented and more liable to fall into lines such as:

"the ocean bared
And rolled its horrible bold eyeballs endlessly
In round rebuke."

which I find rather silly. To be quite unfair, I should set against them the following:

"October is spreading bright flame along stripped willows,
Low fires of the dogwood burn down to grey water,—
God pity me now and all desolate sinners
Demented with beauty! I have blackened my thought
In drouths of bad longing, and all brightness goes shrouded . . ."

—from Patrick MacDonogh, or

"Consider Wordsworth in his withered age
his high song over in ten eager years,
the chill words spilled upon the barren page
that offer boredom's armistice from tears:
yet the old hand set long in habit now,
must rhyme and stanza every trivial dawn,
must lift the silver locks and press the brow
contemplative although the gleam is gone." —from John Hewitt.

There is, inevitably, the odd pretender among the poets, the gate-crasher who can talk about his "Subtle and Proclamant Song", and I feel that although John Gawsworth was born in Kensington, his generations of Irish ancestors and *Collected Poems* would make him a better candidate for inclusion than some of the surprising expatriates who are now found wearing the green. But this is merely the carping of what Padraic Fallon would call a

"tongue sharpened in many a bad house
Where candles are hooded on the black quays of the world"

and the proper judgment of this book is that Yeats himself would have been pleased to have seen the young poets showing the power and clarity, which were his own gifts against an obscure and doubting literary underworld.

Poetry Ireland has given over its sixth number to a new translation by Lord Longford of *The Midnight Court* from the Irish of Bryan Merriman. Unfortunately, I have not the means to compare his work with that of the

translations by Frank O'Connor and Ussher. But I remember the delight of the latter with its introduction by Yeats and its metrical dexterity, e.g.

"I've a dancing, glancing, entrancing eye.
Gold lacks lustre beside my hair."

In Lord Longford's poem this becomes:

"Grey is my eye, this pretty hair of mine
Flows down in curls and coils in ringlets fine."

—which may be more accurate, but which loses something through the change of metre. Nevertheless, this lively Irish classic deserves all the translations it can get.

The Ambleside Book of Verse is an anthology for the beginner and the school. It starts sensibly with ballads and humorous poems and then concentrates upon narratives and lyrics. There is nothing very difficult in it, and it has the great virtue of remembering that poetry is or should be written for reading out loud. Similarly, *The Poet's World* wins my affection by preferring Herrick to the more contorted Metaphysicals, and if one might quarrel with the editor's selections among the moderns, it is certainly arguable that Arthur Waley is preferable to William Empson. Even Mr. Reeves' contention that his readers ought to try to write poetry themselves is sensible, though I hope for his own sake that he will not be deluged with manuscripts.

JOHN BAYLISS.

Rabindranath Tagore, Poet and Dramatist by Edward Thompson. (O.U.P. first published 1926; second edition, revised and reset.)

Eyes of Light by Dilip Kumar Roy. (Nalanda Publications, Bombay).

The Light Above The Clouds by Adi K. Sett, with a Foreword by Verrier Elwin. (Thacker, Bombay.)

Edward Thompson gives a clear impression of the amazing position in which a poet of genius stood in Victorian times, writing in the Bengali language. Before him there had been a handful of poets working in English verse forms and in subject-matter divided into the absurdly orthodox Hindu, the imitators of the new Western thought, and the genuinely original thinkers, such as Michael Madhusudan Dutt, whose struggles with Indian and Western ideas are the basis of modern Bengali literature. Bengali is a language of exceptional beauty, but it was at that time overweighted with Sanskritic formalities, particularly in verb-endings. Rabindranath was the first writer of note to discard these old forms and write verse in the more simple, clipped style of modern speech, the result being that Bengali became the foremost literary language of India, while the poet himself was in the rare position of having a literary world to fashion as he chose. The times demanded that he should write

about every subject, that he should fill with thought and poetry the intellectual desert that surrounded him and into which the new-born language was flowing, as blessed as a spring. This accounts for his immense output, his philosophic plays, his poems of nature, religion, love and mysticism, and his stories and articles dealing with every branch of Hindu reform.

The quality of his work varied. Particularly with his plays he was inclined to put pen to paper before he had sufficiently turned over in his mind what he wanted to say.

It is here that Thompson's book is disappointing. It is difficult enough to appreciate poetry translated from one language into another; but to sustain interest through pages of plot-summaries with occasional quotations, especially when these concern works unknown to the English reader and really only of value to the student of Bengali, is virtually impossible. The author's opinions of Bengali literature, and his judgment of Tagore as a Bengali poet, are sound (although few English readers will agree with his jibe at *The Post Office* which I suspect he had heard praised too often), but this book can be read without any realization of the uniqueness of the Tagore family, their charm, their incredibly diverse talents, their fundamental artistry and integrity, and their special humour.

Dilip Roy prefaces his English poems with the wry observation that "up till now the English people have not favoured Indian poets writing verse in English".

This is not at all surprising. It does not matter what language a writer uses; if Indian poets wrote in Greek the Greeks would be no swifter to favour it. What matters is that a writer's thoughts find expression according to the canons of his particular civilization; he writes essentially for his own people, and those in other countries who appreciate what is written for peoples very different from themselves are essentially few, because in order to appreciate, for instance, Chinese verse, the reader must have sufficient power of imagination to feel he is reading from the point of view of a Chinese, otherwise the verses will merely rank as bizarreries.

Oscar Wilde wrote most presentably in French, and *Salome* has become one of the most famous plays in the world and translated into many languages. It is still not a part of French literature.

Toru Dutt overcame the same barrier; before her death at the age of twenty-three she had written a novel in French and her *Lays and Ballads of Hindustan* in English upon which Sir Edmund Gosse was the first to lay the seal of English literary approval; but an English reader's reaction to her work can scarcely fail to be: "This is the work of an Indian poet writing in our language. It is beautiful. But it belongs to India." It is the same as the Frenchman's reaction to *Salome*.

India has many languages, one of which, due to historical circumstance, is English. It is a source of pride to English people to see the growth of literature written by Indians in English: how could it be otherwise? But Dilip Roy and other Indian poets must not be disappointed if they do not find favour with us, because they do not write for us but for their fellow-countrymen whose approval they must court first, before worrying about us. Toru, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya and Sarojini Naidu can give pleasure to us English, but their work belongs to Indian letters and must be judged in that setting if their real merit is to be perceived. For real merit they possess.

Mr. Roy's patriotic poems are an example of the difference between the canons of two civilizations. In English literature, patriotic verse cannot begin "*O My* (whatever country it may be)!— *O my mother!— O my nursery, nurse and home!*" because patriotic sentiments of this kind, though acceptable to Indian readers, are dismaying to the English, for whom patriotism is a most subtle quality that can only be expressed with indirectness and understatement. Mr. Roy's command of English language and verse forms is indisputable, his facility remarkable, but for us his appeal only rings true in his most restrained and simple moments.

Adi K. Sett's verses are interesting in that they show the trend of younger Indian writers in English. From the English standpoint they lack form and conciseness, and the author seems to use words with only a lax insistence on their meaning. His poems suggest that his fourth or fifth book from now will be a good one. AUSTIN COATES.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY

(Concluding Article)

Alfred Tennyson by Charles Tennyson (Macmillan, 30s.); *A Goddess to A God* by John L. Balderston and Sybil Bolitho (Macmillan Co., New York); *Garnered Sheaves* by Stanton A. Coblentz (Wings Press, California).

I like to remember a day in London some years back when I had the great pleasure of meeting Mr. Yeats at a friend's house at luncheon. It was the day that Lindbergh flew the Atlantic. I dashed up to the distinguished poet and asked, "Have you yet written your poem of the Lindbergh flight?" He looked down upon me with a condescension which was appalling. I continued bravely, "Perhaps you think it was a poem in itself. However, I have written mine dedicated to the Trans-Atlantic fliers and entitled *Hull Down on the Sea Rapture*". I hastened to read him the first of six verses which follows:

> They who have not the blood of heroes in their veins,
> What can they know of the divine account

That such as these must settle with their God?
What can they sense of that force which arraigns?
What can they know of planes by which *they* mount
From the more safe and slothful ways of sod?

I have proudly to add that they are reading it in Congress in Washington today. After this we sat down very amiably and had a delightful luncheon. What wonderful writers Great Britain has produced!

This brings me to the fact that the post brought me today an interesting volume of which I want to tell you. *Alfred Tennyson* by his grandson, Charles Tennyson. The popularity of Alfred Tennyson in America is well known. Though we may say he belongs now to an earlier stage of poetry, he still holds one enthralled. His grandson's book is a monumental work of some 550 pages, giving a detailed account of Alfred Tennyson's life. Perhaps the most interesting chapters of this book to me are those relating to the writing of dramas by him.

Tennyson was pre-eminently the artist. Still he was alert to the social and scientific prospects widening in his time. In succinct and often final form he stated the problems of the thinkers of his class—the hope, the doubt, the despair—problems touched upon also in different keys by Browning and by Arnold—all of them veering with the many perturbations of the troubled needle of faith. Carrying on the golden tradition of Keats. Tennyson has an imperishable place in English poetry. To his cradle-gifts of imagination and melody, he adds a noble power of restraint. His work stands as the rose or the crystal, beauty compelled to final forms.

In their *A Goddess to a God*, a book embodying the correspondence from Cleopatra to Caesar, Miss Bolitho and Mr. Balderston have rendered a striking service for the lovers of the Egyptian Queen and her romantic history. Perhaps no two figures are more engaging to the poet than Cleopatra and Caesar. We will recall that Shakespeare could not pass them by and speaking personally. I could not do so either. My poetic play *Caesar the Undefeated* is included in my recent volume, *Six Historic and Romantic Leaders*. The story of these two romantic figures is carefully indicated by the authors. The book is not poetry except in the sense that all great romances are poetry.

Garnered Sheaves by Stanton A. Coblentz represents the gleanings from more than thirty years of verse-writing. Ending with, *Starlight*, 1943:

Nightly around us, like a cloak, there hovers
The infinite and timeless. Where the boughs
Of starlit oaks are dim for bards and lovers,
Far suns and perished ages kiss our brows.

This poet and his work are too well known for further comment.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

With regard to Mr. Randall Swingler's criticism, it should not be forgotten that Byron spoke contemptuously of Keats's early writings and advised the young cockney "rhymester" (who was then studying medicine) "to return to his gallipots." Did this remark suggest a retaliation by his contemporary? Later Byron paid handsome tribute to Keats on his reading the latter's great fragmentary poem *Hyperion.*

Surely both these poets are the more precious to us now, confronted as we are by an age of crabbed modernism and pseudo-highbrow inefficiency. To regard them as antagonists or rivals would be secondary indeed, when they so obviously (with Shelley) are the torch-bearers of Eternity, sent to lighten our present darkness and give hope to the future.

I am, etc.

ARTHUR ROW.

Sir,

The criticism of *Oxford Poetry 1948* by Mr. John Waller in your June-July issue contains even more mis-statements than Mr. Waller is customarily liable to make. It was NOT a quiet year in Oxford. The war had NOT been forgotten—how could it be, with ex-service veterans forming a large proportion of the undergraduates? Most of the poets Mr. Waller mentions in this book have known war-service.

The young men and women were NOT rosy-eyed, unless with hay fever. They were far too well aware of a cosmic atmosphere of doom, and they sought to forget that atmosphere in various ways. Not all chose Mr. Waller's ways, perhaps. There WAS concern with politics (too much, alas!) and with the atom bomb, which entered practically every serious conversation in the most insolent way.

Let us return to the subject—an admittedly undistinguished collection of poems. The vintage is indeed a poor one—but to most of us who appreciate English literature its poverty lies in such bogus nonsense as that written by "the patient Arthur Boyars."

That poem from which Mr. Waller holds up a disconnected fragment for our disdain, that "Elegy in May" by Michael Lloyd which reveals so much thought and personal anguish in a controlled nobility of form, is unquestionably the finest poem in the book by literary standards. Its style and content alike should lay claim upon anthologies less ephemeral than this. If Mr. Waller were capable of feeling, or writing, as sensitively he might make fewer mis-statements.

I am, etc.

G. W. L. TELFER.

Sir,

There has long been a saying among legal counsel to the effect that when one has a weak case, the thing to do is to abuse one's opposite number. It is regrettable that Mr. Roy Campbell has acted in accordance with that aphorism in formulating his reply to my criticism of his review of *The Complete Poems of Richard Aldington.*

In his review, Mr. Roy Campbell says rhymes were originally intended "as hurdles, ditches, and hedges, to tire out long-winded poets so that they would soon lose their breath and shut up. The metre was apparently intended to serve to the average poet's thoughts as a corral serves to a herd of jungle-happy nanny-goats to keep them from rambling, and straying, and getting lost." From the context, these original uses have continued until today. To him rhyme and metre are "traditional aids to poetic form" and are only "conventions",—of so little account that Mr. Aldington was able to dispense with them from the outset. There is nothing in his review to counterbalance these "scathing remarks" on rhyme and metre.

In his reply to my criticism, Mr. Roy Campbell says "It is perfectly obvious that I regard rhyme and metre as necessities when they are not ornaments," but there is not the slightest intimation in his review that they are ever ornaments.

I am, etc.

HOWARD PARSONS.

Sir,

With reference to my contribution, *Sir Walter Scott: Thirteen New Poems?* which appeared in your issue for August-September, 1949, I wish to rectify two of the items. Mr. D. S. Colman, of No. 4 The Schools, Shrewsbury, drew my attention to the fact that Poem 5, beginning "Trained by Adversity's stern hand", is a comparatively free adaptation of Horace, *Odes*, Book III, No. 2, "augustam amice pauperiem pati". Poem 10, entitled *Inscription*, beginning "To youth, to age, alike this tablet pale", is not an unpublished piece as I mistakenly believed it was. It is contained in Lockhart's large one-volume, annotated edition of Scott's *Poetical Works* (1841), page 717, where it appears as *Inscription for the Monument of the Rev. George Scott* and with a footnote stating: "This young gentleman, a son of the author's friend and relation, Hugh Scott of Harden, Esq. (now Lord Polwarth), became Rector of Kentisbeare, in Devonshire, in 1828, and died there the 9th June, 1830. This epitaph appears on his tomb in the chancel there".

I am, etc.

W. M. PARKER.

Sir,

May I offer, very briefly, some comments on five of the thirteen Scott poems which Mr. Parker recently contributed?

No. 2. This is the well-known ballad, sometimes called *The Tod,* with the final stanza added. Scott was probably the author of these four concluding lines of doggerel, but even so that does not entitle him to be called the author of the whole poem. (*See* Vol. 1, pp. 38 and 61 of *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott,* edited by Sir Herbert Grierson, assisted by Mr. Parker!)

No. 10. This is the *Inscription for the Monument of the Rev. George Scott,* written in 1830 and first printed by Lockhart in Vol. XI of Scott's *Poetical Works,* published in 1834.

No. 11. This, called by Mr. Parker "an epilogue to a play," is scarcely that, for it is a draft of the well-known poem *Lines, written for Miss Smith,* which appears in all editions of Scott's poetical works. The poem was written in 1807, but was not published till 1833 when it appeared in *The Forget-Me-Not for 1834.* The occasion of the poem will be found in a letter from Scott to Miss Smith in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott,* Vol. 1, p. 372.

No. 12. This is, I believe, a portion of an anonymous poem entitled "A Panegyrick on the Author of *Absolom* and *Achitophel,* occasioned by his former writing of an *Elegy* in praise of *Oliver Cromwell, lately Reprinted,*" printed as a broadside in 1681. (*See* Macdonald's *John Dryden, a bibliography,* Oxford, 1939, No. 201a.)

No. 13. These lines accompanied a letter sent by Sir Walter Scott to General Stewart on October 18, 1828, in reply to a request that Scott should give him some verses as a souvenir before he set off to take up his appointment as Governor of St. Lucia. The letter and the accompanying verses were printed by a relative of General Stewart in *Life and Work,* Vol. 17 (1895) and reprinted in *The Scotsman* of December 26, 1895. Mr. Parker's version is inaccurate and some of his readings do not make sense. The more correct reading of the three concluding stanzas is:

> With Highland chiefs he had a vote
> For well the plaids loved Walter Scott.
>
> His greyhounds good were fleet as thought
> Till age lamed them and Walter Scott.
>
> Call this vile stuff—I reck it not—
> So there's an end of Walter Scott.

I am, etc.

JAMES C. CORSON*.

* Dr. James C. Corson, of the University Library, Edinburgh, is the author of *A Bibliography of Sir Walter Scott,* 1934—Editor.

Sir,

Mr. Meyerstein forgets that his "hubbub-triumph" is obviously intended to do duty not only for the word "tohu-bohus", but also for the word "triomphants"; so if his excuse for perpetrating it were genuine (namely that he was concerned with rendering the meaning in exactly "*the same number of syllables*")—it would be a matter, not of four, but of seven sylla-hubbubbubbubbles in all, if I, too, may muscle in on his hubby-hubbly technique. It seems queer to pretend to such numerical preoccupations in the case of one sole word, in view of his complete indifference to such considerations everywhere else, in perpetrating even worse verbal atrocities, such as "*Ocean's wheezy sniffs*" or "*cow-crammed dairies hysterical*". That such a writer should dare to pretend to discrimination in matters of "subtle word-music" or "cacophony" is almost as hilarious a matter as his translation: and he even knows less about cattle than about literature! Cattle that wheeze and run at the nose, without previous exertion, but merely from standing stock-still in dairies (to represent Mr. Meyerstein's conception of breakers hurling themselves at rocks) are "poussifs" in the vet's sense—whether Mr. Meyerstein likes it or not! That I say not as a reviewer, but as an accredited cattleman of the Camargue, where my thirty years' connection with it was publicly celebrated this year (See *Evening News*, June 4 and the leading article *Une Grande Figure de Camarguais* in *Le Provençal*, July 10, *Nouvelles Litteraires*, July 29, etc., etc.) If Mr. Meyerstein's "intention" was ***not*** to present a seedy picture of sick cattle he was more maladroit than I thought, when I credited him with *knowing* what he was up to. I knew Rimbaud's work even before I hit the Camargue. No one knowing both, could possibly help seeing the obvious connection of the only place in all geography and the only verse in all literature (outside Provençal) which both couple the Holy-Maries-of-the-Sea with cattle and the blessing of the waves. The Obvious is not an "idea" which can be exclusively ascribed by wiseacres to any Professor who happens to notice it, and forcibly denied to any reviewer who is forced to refer to it. My only other reference to this obvious connection was printed in 1923. Mr. Meyerstein considers it an "Idea" nay, a *discovery*, of the nineteen-forties!!

I am, etc.

ROY CAMPBELL

THE HOWARD PARSONS EPIGRAM COMPETITION

The essential thing, if you are entering an Epigram Competition is to send in an epigram, which is quite a closely defined literary device, altogether different from the Clerihews, short, snappy little poems and prose aphorisms sent in liberally for this competition.

The point about the epigram is simply the sting in the tail. A good specimen sails along smoothly and gently as though it could hardly move and then bring its tail over and stings you unexpectedly with the last line. A number of good ones were sent in and we print the three prize-winners below:

EPIGRAM

Give me in Heaven the blandly ungrateful,
The stupid, the pompous, the petty, the fearful;
Lest, strange and alone by the amethyst portal,
I meet not one soul who resembles a mortal.

CLARA LANYON-LANYON.

THEOLOGY IN A NUTSHELL

I pay no attention to those folks who tell
Me there are no such places as heaven and hell.
For if there's no heaven, pray where can I go?
If no hell—what's to happen to some folks I know?

J SACKVILLE MARTIN

THE SILLY BEST-SELLER

Best-selling B was fond of liquor,
Saying it made his blood run quicker,
But being an immoderate beast,
Drank till his circulation ceased.

WILFRID THORLEY.

We award the First prize to Carla Lanyon-Lanyon for an epigram which completes the mixture as above, and adds to it that touch of warm humanity which makes the epigram a poem.

T. W. RAMSEY.

POEMS OF PLACE COMPETITION FOR 1949

The many entries for this Competition are rather disappointing. So many bear no relation to real poetry. Few give the reader any clear picture of the place in question.

The titles of many speak for their own ineptitude: *Illusions, Food for my Soul, Gale, With Silence Laid, The Cross of Peace, The Lost Soul, etc.*

Some ignore the rules of this Competition—"they *must* be typewritten—only *three* entries allowed"—they are thus disqualified.

Several long efforts seem to have been culled from the Seedsman's Catalogues. Some go into obstetric details which are repulsive and unnecessary in a poem—if left in the vernacular instead of being translated into English they might be less unpleasing!

A few have quite lovely quatrains, but fall down for the sake of sustained effort and polish.

Many are rhymes not poetry and so long that they become boring. A few suffer from trying to be too clever and read unpleasantly.

The Roof Garden, Johannesburg by Phillis N. Bower is charming—but 4½ lines with 32 words between comma and full stop might try the powers of the most long-winded! As a Sonnet *Pittsburg* fails in the 1st and 11th lines. *Spring in Cornwall* by Eva Martin though polished and pleasant might concern any southern seaboard.

Grays, Essex by Mary Fretton is descriptive and a brave effort to draw some comfort from a most forbidding scene.

Esdale Head House by Dorothy Spring has description, imagination and feeling.

Ombersley by Nancy Pollok is charming for sheer unpretentiousness and simplicity.

A. DOROTHY HOLMES.

AWARDS

First Prize (£5), *Durban, From the Berea* by Daphne M. Child. Second Prize (£2 10s.), *Worlds View, Matopos* by Phillipa Christie. Tied for Third Prize (£1 10s. each), *Esdale Head House* by Dorothy Spring and *Ombersley* by Nancy Pollok.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Roof Garden from His Majesty's Theatre, Johannesburgh by Phillis N. Bower; *Mount Royal* by Capt. G. K. Hannah; *Liddington Hill* by Molly Gilbert; *Rye* by G. J. Blundell.

COMMENDED

Sea Washed Carmel by Kered Wardlaw; *Ilfracombe* by Ernest C. Toye; *Grays, Essex* by Mary Fretton; *Ilkley (after 20 years)* by G. M. Hawksley; *King's Lynn* by G. A. Durrant.

DURBAN

From the Berea

The lights are glittering jewels whose brilliance burns
Upon the velvet background of the night;
The sparkling city is entrancing, gay,
Its beauty stirs me to a quick delight.
The languorous wind's caressing and the song
A native strums with rhythmic, weird refrain,
The scents and sounds, awake desires and thoughts
That darkness, deep, primeval, brings in train.
The lights are fireflies dancing in the dusk—
So frail their flame—but night's star-blazoned sky
Is old, eternal, changeless as the wind
That whispers here where once the trumpet-cry
Of elephants was heard and hippo lay
Basking among the reeds of torpid streams.
A land untamed, alone. How small the space
Between the present and a past that seems
Remote, forgotten, yet the hidden power
Of instincts lives, the evils and the fears,
And beauty free and savage as the waves
Surging upon these shores in desolate years.

Tall shadows cast their purple slant across
The silent street, and pale sunshine lights
The topmost branches of the trees; beyond,
The city slowly waking from the night's
Repose is veiled in fragile mist that hides
Her form in wreaths of white, which drift and change
With the first morning breath; above the mist
The summit of the Bluff emerges strange,
Unreal, as some vast sleeping monster's back.
So fresh, expectant is the early day,
Perhaps it was an hour like this that saw
A sailing ship drop anchor in the Bay,
And those adventurers who dared to face
The dangers of an unknown land, the spears
Of Zulu impi's; these were men who dreamed,
Whose dream endured the stress of troubled years,
And the proud city is their monument.
Little of theirs remains—a grave, a name
Endures—a statue set beside the Bay
Commemorates a lonely ride to fame.

Hot glare of noon upon white walls; the red
Flamboyant trees in flaring splendour; green
Of tropic foliage, shadows black beneath;
An azure sea of watered silk, a scene
As lovely as the rich exotic flowers
That flourish in this heavy humid air.
This is the city in whose harbour lie
The ships of many lands, a city where
The past and present meet, the modern age
Of industry and traffic's din and drone
Of aeroplanes that skim the cloudless sky—
And the old Africa whose eyes have known
The white man's wonders but a little time.
I see the Zulu women in their beads,
The Indian girls in vivid sari's, gay
As butterflies; all races, colours, creeds
Are mingled here, and evil lurks behind
The bright façade; nor can our Western skill
Defeat the old beliefs of spell and charm;
The Zulu wizards serve the spirits still.

Cool-shadowed, tranquil, lies the city now
At evening; red-gold by the waterside
Rise the tall buildings in the transient light
Of sunset; far away the white birds glide
Upon the swiftly-darkening air to seek
Their resting places; sky and sea
Merge in a gold-dust haze and clouds above
Hang blue with pending rain; there come to me
The sounds of nesting birds, the scent of earth
Damp and refreshed that thirsted through the day
For ease and shade. So calm and still the scene
It fills my heart with hope and drives away
My sombre cares, my dull oppressive thoughts.
The noise and heat, the discord and the strife
Are past, O restless city, you are free
At evening and the hum of throbbing life
Is hushed; your beauty is transformed and changed,
Unearthly in the sunset's dying gold.
What destiny awaits your future years,
What story like a vivid flower unfold?

DAPHNE M. CHILD.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE POETRY HOUR AT 33 PORTMAN SQUARE, W.1.

Inaugurating the first of the New Series of 6.15 p.m. Friday Readings last September, the President of The Poetry Society, Mr. T. W. Ramsey, F.R.S.L., gave the following address:—

"The series of Friday readings which ended last July, attracted a good deal of attention and larger audiences than had in general come to these occasions. We are hoping that the new series which starts today will be equally or even more successful and I want to talk to you this evening about this series and explain to you certain fundamental differences from the outlook and general approach of last season's readings.

"The last series of readings was to some extent experimental, though it was on the whole a successful experiment, and certainly an interesting one. The aim was to give a sort of general or birds-eye view of the whole course of English poetry from Chaucer to the present day and in order to give modern poets no opportunity to complain of neglect we gave them 50 per cent of the time—every other reading being in fact a modern, or at any rate a contemporary poet. Such a project in a comparatively short series of readings must carry the defects of its own ambition; and one of the serious and obvious defects in such a programme was the complete impossibility of giving the giants of English Poetry anything but a very inadequate representation. Indeed when it came to Shakespeare the Readings Committee—very wisely, I think—fought shy of the problem altogether, rightly feeling that omission was better than attempting to put him into the pint-pot of an hour.

"For the coming season the problem has been approached in another way, though it will still be our endeavour to sketch something of the development of our Poetry. We intend to study the period in poetry rather more closely; and the individual poet rather less so. We shall try moreover to relate certain of the modern writers to the period which we are studying and to show, we hope, that the fundamentals of poetry do not alter, that the problems of the poet of today are essentially the same as the problems of the poet hundreds of years ago; and that his approach to those problems is not so dissimilar as we are inclined to fancy. That, in short, the word "modern" is a much over-worked word, and due for a long rest.

"I am no more moved by tenderness for these moderns, than I am impressed by the fulminations against them which we have witnessed in various quarters during past years. Indeed, if that battle were ever seriously joined, except as a paste-board combat, it would not be the function of our Society to take part in it. It is our function to cherish, to preserve, to bear our witness to the whole of the great heritage of English poetry, irrespective of time. But as the longer time will in the nature of things contain a greater number of memorable works, so it is natural also that the past will take a larger share of our time than the present—probably at least two thirds of it.

"We have under consideration a certain method of approach which will make this essential timeless quality of all true poetry apparent to those who come to these readings. We believe that poets of all times tend to return again and again to the same themes; that even if the circumstances of the struggle alter from age to age, the fundamentals do not change. We propose to select one or two of those fundamental themes and to consider in each period how the great writers of that day reacted to them; and then to observe how certain cognate poets of the present day react to these same themes. We shall find that the spirit of adventure and of innovation is not a monopoly of the 20th century; and also, I believe, that adroitness and craft and the gracious handling of words did not die with the 19th.

"We inaugurate our new series this evening with a somewhat generalized programme

of this kind, in which Humanity and Courage have been selected as the dominant fundamental themes. Certainly fundamental: humanity never needed the exercise of all its courage more than it needs it now. But if humanity needs courage today, we say also that it has never failed to show it abundantly when it was needed in the past; and that the poets have always been among the foremost in expressing it.

"This evening, in a little while, you will hear how such giants as Langland, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare and Marlowe have treated this theme; and then for immediate comparison, no less urgent, no more modern, Thompson, Housman and Eliot.

"I shall not need to say much about the actual speaking of the verse. I know it will stand for itself without difficulty on this and other occasions. We have got together a good panel of verse speakers, and I am glad to tell you that a very large proportion of them are our own Gold Medallists. One of tonight's speakers, Jill Harvie, received her medal at the last audition in July this year.

"I have said it is our function to cherish English poetry. It is also our function to be selective, and it is unnecessary to add that we shall not present anything in these programmes, new or old, which does not seem to us to be memorable.

"Obviously different men will have different ideas about what makes poetry memorable. I have my own, but I can seldom attend Committee meetings, so they are unlikely to influence our elections very much. Several things make poetry memorable for me: intricacy and inevitability of the metrical structure of course; and fire and passion and colour. Mostly what I call the double image, an even subtler thing than the two-fold meaning, allegorical and actual, surface and depth, which all good poetry has. You have a good example in Dante's *Cielo Stellato*, where he compares the dances of the various choirs and groups of the redeemed to the movement of wheels in clock-work:

Even as wheels in clock-work harmony
Vary their speed of movement and the first
Seems to be crawling round, the last to fly,

So did these carols with their different measures
Of dancing, some so swift, others so slow,
Exhibit each his individual treasure.

"The image is beautiful and apt; and if you have ever looked inside a running clock-work mechanism, you know exactly what Dante meant. But in time and without effort, just by letting the words act on you, you will see something else as well; that as all the wheels of a clock are driven by one spring, so these joyous beings are driven on the dance by one force, the love and adoration of God. The secondary and surprising image completes the picture.

"It is this quality in poetry that brings poets out of the stream of time into the circle of Eternity, that City of the Sun which is their heritage and in which they can by degrees teach us to move."

The President's speech was followed by a reading of English Poetry from Langland to the Present Day, admirably interpreted by June Franklin, Jill Harvie and Donald Hewlett, with the Chairman of the Readings' Committee in the Chair.

Friday, December 9th at 6.15 p.m. *"OUR OWN POETS"*
A Reading by poets in the Society, including G. S. Fraser, John Gawsworth, E. H. W. Meyerstein, Thomas Moult, T. W. Ramsey, and William Kean Seymour.

Friday, December 16th, at 6.15 p.m. *SIDNEY KEYES*
An Illustrated Talk by Michael Meyer with Pamela Barnard.
John Carroll in the Chair.

EUROPEAN POETRY: BILINGUAL READINGS
at 33 Portman Square, W.1.

Wednesday, December 14th, at 6.15 p.m. — *GOETHE*
Bi-Centenary Special Reading

Wednesday, January 18th, at 6.15 p.m. — *DANTE'S "PARADISO"*
Reading from English Translation of T. W. Ramsey, F.R.S.L., Pres. Poetry Society.

THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE POETRY CENTRE

December 10th at 3.0 p.m. — *Tennyson and Whittier.*
British Legion, Tylers Green.

THE CHELSEA POETRY CIRCLE
(Affiliated to the Poetry Society. Formed 1946)

President: Dame Sybil Thorndike

Vice-President: Miss Margaret Rawlings

Informal readings are held each month in members homes, and occasional public readings at the National Trust Museum, 3 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, S.W.3. Full particulars from the *Hon. Secretary*, John E. Carroll, 5 Redesdale Street, S.W.3.

THE GUILDFORD POETRY CENTRE

Details of Meetings may be obtained from The Centre Secretary, Miss C. Kearse 132 Maybury Road, Woking.

THE HAMPSTEAD POETRY CENTRE

The meetings of the Hampstead Poetry Centre will be held on the first and third Thursdays of the month, at 8-9.30 p.m. at 9 Wentworth Mansions, Keats Grove, N.W.3, by invitation of Miss M. H. Huntsman (Hon. Secretary). The next reading will be on 5th January, when we hope to welcome our members and friends.

January 5. — *Translations* (including Goethe's poems).
January 19. — *John Masefield.*
February 2. — *Business Meeting* (followed by readings from American poets).
February 16. — *The Seasons.*
March 2. — *Poets and the Child.*

THE REIGATE POETRY CENTRE

Details of Meetings may be obtained from the Centre Secretary, Mrs. M. A. Hicks, The Alton, Alma Road, Reigate.

THE ST. PETERSBURG (U.S.A.) CENTRE

(Formed 1946)

National President: Marie Tello Phillips

State President: Pearl Safford

Members and potential members are invited to communicate with H. T. Douglas Robinson, 815 Jackson Street No., St. Petersburg 6, Florida. The centre seeks to promote production of the best in poetry.

Members are at present working on preparation of book-manuscripts to be submitted to *Poetry Awards*, Pasadena, California.

THE VANCOUVER POETRY CENTRE

The Vancouver Centre of The Poetry Society held its twenty-sixth Annual Gathering at the home of its Director, Mrs. Irene H. Moody (Lewis), in Cypress Park, West Vancouver, B.C., on the afternoon of Sunday, July 10.

A very fine address was given by Dr. Lionel Stevenson, Head of the English Department of the University of Southern California.

The Poetry Writers' Group resumed work in September, and welcomes any writer of original verse who wishes to work and is willing to take criticism. No fees are required.

THE WINNIPEG POETRY CENTRE

The Poetry Society of Winnipeg's present season deals with "Fifty Years of Poetry: 1899-1949".

Will anyone able and willing to start a Centre in any part of the country please communicate with the Secretary, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S AUDITIONS AND EXAMINATIONS

The Poetry Society has conducted auditions and examinations in the art of verse-speaking for many years, and its success in this valuable cultural activity is attested by the fact that the number of schools and institutions in all parts of England which the Society examines, continually increases.

Junior preliminary examinations are available for the youngest children and these continue through various grades, up to the final test for adult students, for which the Society's gold medal is the final award for success.

General regulations governing these auditions may be obtained on application to The Registrar, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, with whom arrangements can be made for auditions for schools, colleges, or private individuals.

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITIONS FOR 1949

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of £20 as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed "The Greenwood Prize", 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The*

Poetry Review and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editor, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*.

Closing date is 31st December, 1949.

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION

The above competition continues as before with the offer of £10 in prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired. (See Rule 3.)
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed "Premium Competition", *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize twice will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for the next Premium Competition will be 15th February, 1950.

THE HOWARD PARSONS' EPIGRAM COMPETITION

The Poetry Society is empowered by Mr. Howard Parsons, a long-standing member of the Society, to offer the following prizes, endowed by him for an Epigram Competition.

1st prize, 5 guineas; 2nd prize, 2 guineas; 3rd prize, 1 guinea. Entries which should not have been previously published should be marked "Epigram" and should not bear a stamped addressed envelope, as MSS. cannot be returned. They should be addressed to The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, to reach here not later than 1st March, 1950. The Society reserves the right to extend the closing date of the competition should none of the entries reach the required standard.

THE POETRY SOCIETY JUNIOR VERSE COMPETITION

The Poetry Society have pleasure in announcing an annual Junior Verse Competition. Schools throughout the country are invited to co-operate in submitting the work of their pupils.

The Competition will be divided into two classes:

(*a*) Not more than one poem, previously unpublished, to be submitted by any one competitor, age up to thirteen years last birthday. There will be a book prize inscribed by the Poetry Society.

(*b*) Not more than one poem, previously unpublished, to be submitted by any one competitor, age from fourteen to seventeen years last birthday. There will be a book prize, inscribed by the Poetry Society and four additional prizes of one year's Membership to the Poetry Society.

The poem may be on any subject. Closing date, 30th June, 1950. Entries to be addressed to: The Junior Verse Competition, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Entries should bear the names and addresses of competitors and copies should be retained as these cannot be returned.

THE LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS SONNET COMPETITION FOR 1950

The Poetry Society has the pleasure of announcing the fourth Annual Competition in memory of Lord Alfred Douglas for a sonnet upon any subject. One of the two forms adopted by Lord Alfred Douglas in his sonnets, must be used; these are:

For the Octave — 1, 2, 2, 1; 1, 2, 2, 1.

For the Sextet — 3, 4, 5; 3, 4, 5 *or* 3, 4; 3, 4; 3, 4.

The prize of £10 may be divided at the discretion of the adjudicator; the winning poem or poems will be published with the award in *The Poetry Review*. Competitors must retain copies of their poems as these cannot be returned. The sonnets should bear a definite title and not merely marked "Sonnet". Not more than two sonnets may be submitted by each competitor by 30th June, 1950. Address "Sonnet Competition", The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Entries should bear names and addresses of competitors. No previously published poem may be entered.

POEMS OF PLACE COMPETITION FOR 1950

Mrs. A. Dorothy Holmes, a Shropshire member of The Poetry Society, offers £10 annually in competition for poems of place. Competitors who must be members of The Poetry Society, may submit not more than two poems, previously unpublished, of not more than 100 lines. All entries should be typewritten and bear the name and address of the author; poems should be addressed to "The Holmes Prize", The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, not later than 1st April, 1950. The judges may divide the prize money at their discretion, and the winning poem or poems may be published in *The Poetry Review*. Competitors are asked to keep copies of their entries as these cannot be returned.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S CRITICAL SERVICE

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing the continuance of its Critical Service. Two poems only may be submitted for criticism, for a minimum fee of 5s. The charge for the criticism of each additional poem is 2s. It is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed and that a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed.

POETRY READINGS, KINGSWAY HALL

Informal lunch-time poetry readings have been resumed by Alan Phillips at Kingsway Hall, W.C., on Thursdays at 1.15 p.m., when all comers are most welcome.